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EDGAR HUNTLY,

OR MEMOIRS OF A

SLEEP-WALKER.

A Novel.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY

C. B. BROWN,

AUTHOR OF

Arthur Mervyn, Wieland, Ormond, &c.

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EDGAR HUNTLY.

CHAP. I.

I SIT down, my friend, to comply with thy request. At length does the impetuosity of my fears, the transports of my wonder permit me to recollect my promise, and perform it. At length am I somewhat delivered from suspense and from tremors. At length the drama is brought to an imperfect close, and the series of events that absorbed my faculties,

that hurried away my attention, has terminated in repose.

Till now, to hold a stedfast pen was impossible;—to disengage my senses from the scene that was passing or approaching—to forbear to grasp at futurity—to suffer so much thought to wander from the purpose which engrossed my fears and my hopes, could not be.

Yet am I sure that even now my perturbations are sufficiently stilled for an employment like this?—that the incidents I am going to relate can be recalled and arranged without indistinctness and confusion?—that emotions will not be reawakened by my narrative, incompatible with order and coherence?—Yet when I shall be better qualified for this task I know

know not. Time may take away these headlong energies, and give me back my ancient sobriety; but this change will only be effected by weakening my remembrance of these events. In proportion as I gain power over words, shall I lose dominion over sentiments; in proportion as my tale is deliberate and slow, the incidents and motives which it is designed to exhibit, will be imperfectly revived and obscurely portrayed.

Oh! why art thou away at a time like this? Wert thou present, the office to which my pen is so inadequate would easily be executed by my tongue. Accents can scarcely be too rapid, or that which words should fail to convey, my looks and gestures would suffice to communicate. But I know thy coming is impos-

sible. To leave this spot is equally beyond my power. To keep thee in ignorance of what has happened would justly offend thee. There is no method of informing thee except by letter, and this method, must I, therefore, adopt.

How short is the period that has elapsed since thou and I parted, and yet how full of tumult and dismay has been my soul during that period! What light has burst upon my ignorance of myself and of mankind! How sudden and enormous the transition from uncertainty to knowledge!

But let me recall my thoughts: let me struggle for so much composure as will permit my pen to trace intelligible characters. Let me place in order the incidents that are to compose my tale. I need

need not call on thee to listen. The fate of Waldegrave was as fertile of torment to thee as to me. His bloody and mysterious catastrophe equally awakened thy grief, thy revenge, and thy curiosity. Thou wilt catch from my story every horror and every sympathy which it paints. Thou wilt shudder with my foreboding, and dissolve with my tears. As the sister of my friend, and as one who honours me with her affection, thou wilt share in all my tasks and all my dangers.

You need not be reminded with what reluctance I left you. To reach this place by evening was impossible, unless I had set out early in the morning; but your society was too precious not to be enjoyed to the last moment. It was indispensable to be here on Tuesday; but my duty

required no more than that I should arrive by sunrise on that day. To travel during the night was productive of no formidable inconvenience. The air was likely to be frosty and sharp, but these would not incommode one who walked with speed. A nocturnal journey in districts so romantic and wild as these, through which lay my road, was more congenial to my temper than a noonday ramble.

By nightfall I was within ten miles of my uncle's house. As the darkness increased, and I advanced on my way, my sensations sunk into melancholy. The scene and the time reminded me of the friend whom I had lost. I recalled his features, and accents, and gestures, and mused with unutterable feelings on the circumstances of his death.

My

My recollections once more plunged me into anguish and perplexity. Once more I asked, who was his assassin? By what motives could he be impelled to a deed like this? Waldegrave was pure from all offence. His piety was rapturous. His benevolence was a stranger to remissness or torpor. All who came within the sphere of his influence experienced and acknowledged his benign activity. His friends were few, because his habits were timid and reserved; but the existence of an enemy was impossible.

I recalled the incidents of our last interview—my importunities that he should postpone his ill-omened journey till the morning—his inexplicable obstinacy—his resolution to set out on foot during a dark

and tempestuous night, and the horrible disaster that befel him.

The first intimation I received of this misfortune—the insanity of vengeance and grief into which I was hurried—my fruitless searches for the author of this guilt—my midnight wanderings and reveries beneath the shade of that fatal elm, were revived and reacted. I heard the discharge of the pistol—I witnessed the alarm of Inglefield—I heard his calls to his servants, and saw them issue forth with lights, and hasten to the spot whence the sound had seemed to proceed. I beheld my friend stretched upon the earth, ghastly with a mortal wound, alone, with no traces of the slayer visible, no tokens by which his place of refuge might be sought

sought—the motives of his enmity, or his instruments of mischief might be detected.

I hung over the dying youth, whose insensibility forbade him to recognise his friend, or unfold the cause of his destruction. I accompanied his remains to the grave—I tended the sacred spot where he lay—I once more exercised my penetration and my zeal in pursuit of his assassin—once more my meditations and exertions were doomed to be disappointed.

I need not remind thee of what is past. Time and reason seemed to have dissolved the spell which made me deaf to the dictates of duty and discretion. Remembrances had ceased to agonize, to urge me to headlong acts, and foster sanguinary purposes. The gloom was half dispersed,

and a radiance had succeeded sweeter than my former joys.

Now, by some unseen concurrence of reflections, my thoughts reverted into some degree of bitterness. Methought that to ascertain the hand who killed my friend, was not impossible, and to punish the crime was just—that to forbear enquiry, or withhold punishment was to violate my duty to my God and to mankind. The impulse was gradually awakened that bade me once more to seek the elm—once more to explore the ground, to scrutinize its trunk. What could I expect to find? Had it not been a hundred times examined? Had I not extended my search to the neighbouring groves and precipices? Had I not pored upon the brooks, and pried into

into the pits and hollows that were adjacent to the scene of blood?

Lately I had viewed this conduct with shame and regret; but in the present state of my mind it assumed the appearance of conformity with prudence, and I felt myself irresistibly prompted to repeat my search. Some time had elapsed since my departure from this district—time enough for momentous changes to occur. Expedients that formerly were useless, might now lead instantaneously to the end which I sought. The tree which had formerly been shunned by the criminal, might, in the absence of the avenger of blood, be incautiously approached. Thoughtless, or fearless of my return, it was possible that he might at this moment be detected hovering near the scene of his offences.

Nothing can be pleaded in extenuation of this relapse into folly. My return, after an absence of some duration, into the scene of these transactions and sufferings, the time of night, the glimmering of the stars, the obscurity in which external objects were wrapped, and which, consequently, did not draw my attention from the images of fancy, may, in some degree, account for the revival of those sentiments and resolutions which immediately succeeded the death of Waldegrave, and which, during my visit to you, had been suspended.

You know the situation of the elm, in the midst of a private road, on the verge of Norwalk, near the habitation of Inglefield, but three miles from my uncle's house. It was now my intention to visit it.

it. The road in which I was travelling led a different way. It was requisite to leave it, therefore, and make a circuit through meadows and over steeps. My journey would, by these means, be considerably prolonged, but on that head I was indifferent; or rather, considering how far the night had already advanced, it was desirable not to reach home till the dawn.

I proceeded in this new direction with speed. Time, however, was allowed for my impetuosities to subside, and for sober thoughts to take place. Still I persisted in this path. To linger a few moments in this shade—to ponder on objects connected with events so momentous to my happiness, promised me a mournful satisfaction. I was familiar with the way, though trackless and intricate, and I climbed the steeps,

steeps, crept through the brambles, leaped the rivulets and fences with undeviating aim, till at length I reached the craggy and obscure path which led to Inglefield's house.

In a short time I descried through the dusk the wide-spread branches of the elm. This tree, however faintly seen, cannot be mistaken for another. The remarkable bulk and shape of its trunk, its position in the midst of the way, its branches spreading into an ample circumference, made it conspicuous from afar. My pulse throbbed as I approached it.

My eyes were eagerly bent to discover the trunk and the area beneath the shade. These, as I approached, gradually became visible. The trunk was not the only thing which

which appeared in view. Somewhat else, which made itself distinguishable by its motions, was likewise noted. I faltered and stopped.

To a casual observer this appearance would have been unnoticed—to me it could not but possess a powerful significance. All my surmises and suspicions instantly returned. This apparition was human; it was connected with the fate of Waldegrave—it led to a disclosure of the author of that fate. What was I to do? To approach unwarily would alarm the person. Instant flight would set him beyond discovery and reach.

I walked softly to the road-side. The ground was covered with rocky masses, scattered among shrub-oaks and dwarf-cedars,

cedars, emblems of its sterile and uncultivated state. Among these it was possible to elude observation, and yet approach near enough to gain an accurate view of this being.

At this time the atmosphere was somewhat illuminated by the moon, which, though it had already set, was yet so near the horizon, as to benefit me by its light. The shape of a man, tall and robust, was now distinguished. Repeated and closer scrutiny enabled me to perceive that he was employed in digging the earth. Something like flannel was wrapped round his waist, and covered his lower limbs. The rest of his frame was naked. I did not recognise in him any one whom I knew.

A figure, robust and strange, and half naked,

naked, to be thus employed, at this hour and place, was calculated to rouse up my whole soul. His occupation was mysterious and obscure. Was it a grave that he was digging? Was his purpose to explore or to hide? Was it proper to watch him at a distance, unobserved and in silence, or to rush upon him, and extort from him, by violence or menaces, an explanation of the scene?

Before my resolution was formed, he ceased to dig. He cast aside his spade, and sat down in the pit that he had dug. He seemed wrapped in meditation; but the pause was short, and succeeded by sobs, at first slow, and at wide intervals, but presently louder and more vehement. Sorely charged was indeed that heart whence flowed these tokens of sorrow!

Never

Never did I witness a scene of such mighty anguish—such heart-bursting grief!

What should I think? I was suspended in astonishment. Every sentiment, at length, yielded to my sympathy; every new accent of the mourner struck upon my heart with additional force, and tears found their way spontaneously to my eyes. I left the spot where I stood, and advanced within the verge of the shade. My caution had forsaken me; and instead of one whom it was my duty to persecute, I beheld in this man nothing but an object of compassion.

My pace was checked by his suddenly ceasing to lament. He snatched the spade, and, rising on his feet, began to cover up the pit with the utmost diligence.

gence. He seemed aware of my presence, and desirous of hiding something from my inspection. I was prompted to advance nearer, and hold his hand; but my uncertainty as to his character and views, the abruptness with which I had been ushered into this scene, made me still hesitate: but though I hesitated to advance, there was nothing to hinder me from calling.

"What, ho!" said I; "who is there? What are you doing?"

He stopped—the spade fell from his hand—he looked up, and bent forward his face towards the spot where I stood. An interview and explanation were now methought unavoidable. I mustered up

my courage to confront and interrogate this being.

He continued for a minute in his gazing and listening attitude. Where I stood, I could not fail of being seen, and yet he acted as if he saw nothing. Again he betook himself to his spade, and proceeded with new diligence to fill up the pit. This demeanour confounded and bewildered me. I had no power but to stand and silently gaze upon his motions.

The pit being filled, he once more sat upon the ground, and resigned himself to weeping and sighs with more vehemence than before. In a short time the fit seemed to have passed. He rose, seized the spade, and advanced to the spot where I stood.

I stood. Again I made preparation as for an interview, which could not but take place. He passed me, however, without appearing to notice my existence. He came so near as almost to brush my arm, yet turned not his head to either side. My nearer view of him made his brawny arms and lofty stature more conspicuous; but his imperfect dress, the dimness of the light, and the confusion of my own thoughts hindered me from discerning his features. He proceeded with a few quick steps along the road, but presently darted to one side, and disappeared among the rocks and bushes.

My eye followed him as long as he was visible, but my feet were rooted to the spot. My musing was rapid and incongruous. It could not fail to terminate in one

one conjecture, that this person was *asleep*. Such instances were not unknown to me, through the medium of conversation and books. Never, indeed, had it fallen under my own observation till now, and now it was conspicuous, and environed with all that could give edge to suspicion, and vigour to enquiry. To stand here was of no longer use, and I turned my steps toward my uncle's habitation.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

I HAD food enough for the longest contemplation. My steps partook, as usual, of the vehemence of my thoughts, and I reached my uncle's gate before I believed myself to have lost sight of the elm. I looked up, and discovered the well-known habitation. I could not endure that my reflections should so speedily be interrupted. I therefore passed the gate, and stopped not till I had reached a neighbouring

neighbouring summit, crowned with chesnut-oaks and poplars.

Here I more deliberately reviewed the incidents that had just occurred. The inference was just, that the man, half clothed and digging, was a sleeper. But what was the cause of this morbid activity? What was the mournful vision that dissolved him in tears, and extorted from him tokens of inconsolable distress? What did he seek, or what endeavour to conceal in this fatal spot?—The incapacity of sound sleep denotes a mind sorely wounded. It is thus that atrocious criminals betray the possession of some dreadful secret: the thoughts, which considerations of safety enable them to suppress or disguise during wakefulness, operate without impediment, and exhibit their

their genuine effects when the notices of sense are partly excluded, and they are shut out from a knowledge of their entire condition.

This is the perpetrator of some nefarious deed. What but the murder of Waldegrave could direct his steps hither? His employment was part of some fantastic drama, in which his mind was busy. To comprehend it, demands penetration into the recesses of his soul. But one thing is sure—an incoherent conception of his concern in that transaction bewitches him hither. This it is that deluges his heart with bitterness, and supplies him with ever-flowing tears.

But whence comes he? He does not start from the bosom of the earth, or hide

himself in airy distance. He must have a name and a terrestrial habitation. It cannot be at an immeasurable distance from the haunted elm. Inglefield's house is the nearest: this may be one of its inhabitants. I did not recognise his features; but this was owing to the dusky atmosphere, and to the singularity of his garb. Inglefield has two servants, one of whom was a native of this district, simple, guileless, and incapable of any act of violence; he was, moreover, devoutly attached to his sect: he could not be the criminal. The other was a person of a very different cast. He was an emigrant from Ireland, and had been six months in the family of my friend. He was a pattern of sobriety and gentleness; his mind was superior to his situation; his natural endowments were strong, and had

enjoyed all the advantage of cultivation. His demeanour was grave, and thoughtful, and compassionate. He appeared not untinctured with religion; but his devotion, though unostentatious, was of a melancholy tenor.

There was nothing in the first view of his character calculated to engender suspicion. The neighbourhood was populous; but as I conned over the catalogue, I perceived that the only foreigner among us was Clithero. Our scheme was, for the most part, a patriarchal one. Each farmer was surrounded by his sons and kinsmen. This was an exception to the rule. Clithero was a stranger, whose adventures and character, previously to his coming hither, were unknown to us. The elm was surrounded by his master's

domains. An actor there must be, and no one was equally questionable.

The more I revolved the pensive and reserved deportment of this man—the ignorance in which we were placed respecting his former situation—his possible motives for abandoning his country, and chusing a station so much below the standard of his intellectual attainments, the stronger my suspicions became. Formerly, when occupied with conjectures relative to the same topic, the image of this man did not fail to occur; but the seeming harmlessness of his ordinary conduct had raised him to a level with others, and placed him equally beyond the reach of suspicion. I did not, till now, advert to the recentness of his appearance among us, and to the obscurity that hung over

over his origin and past life; but now these considerations appeared so highly momentous, as almost to decide the question of his guilt.

But how were these doubts to be changed into absolute certainty? Henceforth this man was to become the subject of my scrutiny. I was to gain all the knowledge respecting him which those with whom he lived, and were the perpetual witnesses of his actions, could impart. For this end I was to make minute enquiries, and to put seasonable interrogatories. From this conduct I promised myself an ultimate solution of my doubts.

I acquiesced in this view of things with considerable satisfaction. It seemed as if the maze was no longer inscrutable. It

would be quickly discovered who were the agents and instigators of the murder of my friend.

But it suddenly occurred to me—"For what purpose shall I prosecute this search? What benefit am I to reap from this discovery? How shall I demean myself when the criminal is detected?"

I was not insensible at that moment of the impulses of vengeance, but they were transient. I detested the sanguinary resolutions that I had once formed; yet I was fearful of the effects of my hasty rage, and dreaded an encounter, in consequence of which I might rush into evils which no time could repair, nor penitence expiate.

"But

"But why," said I, "should it be impossible to arm myself with firmness? If forbearance be the dictate of wisdom, cannot it be so deeply engraven on my mind as to defy all temptation, and be proof against the most abrupt surprise? My late experience has been of use to me—it has shewn me my weakness and my strength. Having found my ancient fortifications insufficient to withstand the enemy, what should I learn from thence but that it becomes me to strengthen and enlarge them? No caution, indeed, can hinder the experiment from being hazardous. Is it wise to undertake experiments by which nothing can be gained, and much may be lost? Curiosity is vicious, if undisciplined by reason, and inconducive to benefit."

It was not, however, to be diverted from my purpose. Curiosity, like virtue, is its own reward. Knowledge is of value for its own sake, and pleasure is annexed to the acquisition, without regard to any thing beyond: it is precious, even when disconnected with moral inducements and heartfelt sympathies; but the knowledge which I sought by its union with these, was calculated to excite the most complex and fiery sentiment in my bosom.

Hours were employed in revolving these thoughts. At length I began to be sensible of fatigue, and returning home, explored the way to my chamber without molesting the repose of the family. You know that our doors are always unfastened, and are accessible at all hours of the night.

My slumbers were imperfect, and I rejoiced when the morning light permitted me to resume my meditations. The day glided away, I scarcely know how; and as I had rejoiced at the return of morning, I now hailed with pleasure the approach of night.

My uncle and sisters having retired, I betook myself, instead of following their example, to the *Chesnut-hill*. Concealed among its rocks, or gazing at the prospect, which stretched so far and so wide around it, my fancy has always been accustomed to derive its highest enjoyment from this spot. I found myself again at leisure to recall the scene which I had witnessed during the last night, to imagine its connection with the fate of Waldegrave, and to plan the means of

discovering the secret that was hidden under these appearances.

Shortly I began to feel insupportable disquiet at the thoughts of postponing this discovery. Wiles and stratagems were practicable, but they were tedious, and of dubious success. Why should I proceed like a plotter? Do I intend the injury of this person? A generous purpose will surely excuse me from descending to artifices? There are two modes of drawing forth the secrets of another, by open and direct means, and by circuitous and indirect. Why scruple to adopt the former mode? Why not demand a conference, and state my doubts, and demand a solution of them, in a manner worthy of a beneficent purpose? Why not hasten to the spot? He may be at this moment

mysteriously occupied under this shade. I may note his behaviour; I may ascertain his person, if not by the features that belong to him, yet by tracing his footsteps when he departs, and pursuing him to his retreats.

I embraced the scheme which was thus suggested, with eagerness. I threw myself, with headlong speed, down the hill, and pursued my way to the elm. As I approached the tree, my palpitations increased, though my pace slackened. I looked forward with an anxious glance. The trunk of the tree was hidden in the deepest shade. I advanced close up to it. No one was visible, but I was not discouraged. The hour of his coming was, perhaps, not arrived. I took my station

at a small distance, beside a fence, on the right hand.

An hour elapsed before my eyes lighted on the object of which they were in search. My previous observation had been roving from one quarter to another: at last, it dwelt upon the tree. The person whom I before described, was seated on the ground. I had not perceived him before, and the means by which he placed himself in this situation had escaped my notice. He seemed like one, whom an effort of will, without the exercise of locomotion, had transported hither, or made visible. His state of disarray, and the darkness that shrouded him, prevented me, as before, from distinguishing any peculiarities in his figure or countenance.

I continued

I continued watchful and mute. The appearances already described took place on this occasion, except the circumstance of digging in the earth. He sat musing for a while, then burst into sighs and lamentations.

These being exhausted, he rose to depart. He stalked away with a solemn and deliberate pace. I resolved to tread as closely as possible, in his footsteps, and not to lose sight of him till the termination of his career.

Contrary to my expectation, he went in a direction opposite to that which led to Inglefield's. Presently he stopped at bars, which he cautiously removed, and, when he had passed through them, as deliberately replaced. He then proceeded along

along an obscure path, which led across stubble fields, to a wood. The path continued through the wood; but he quickly struck out of it, and made his way, seemingly at random, through a most perplexing undergrowth of bushes and briars.

I was, at first, fearful that the noise which I made behind him, in trampling down the thicket, would alarm him; but he regarded it not. The way that he had selected was always difficult; sometimes considerable force was requisite to beat down obstacles; sometimes it led into a deep glen, the sides of which were so steep as scarcely to afford a footing; sometimes into fens, from which some exertions were necessary to extricate the feet, and sometimes through rivulets, of which the water rose to the middle.

For

For some time I felt no abatement of my speed or my resolution. I thought I might proceed, without fear, through brakes and dells, which my guide was able to penetrate. He was perpetually changing his direction. I could form no just opinion as to my situation, or distance from the place at which we had set out.

I began at length to be weary. A suspicion likewise suggested itself to my mind, whether my guide did not perceive that he was followed, and thus prolonged his journey in order to fatigue or elude his pursuer. I was determined, however, to baffle his design. Though the air was frosty, my limbs were bedewed with sweat, and my joints were relaxed with toil; but I was obstinately bent upon proceeding.

At length a new idea occurred to me. On finding me indefatigable in pursuit, this person might resort to more atrocious methods of concealment. But what had I to fear? It was sufficient to be upon my guard. Man to man, I needed not to dread his encounter.

We at last arrived at the verge of a considerable precipice. He kept along the edge. From this height a dreary vale was discoverable, embarrassed with the leafless stocks of bushes, and encumbered with rugged and pointed rocks. This scene reminded me of my situation. The desert track called Norwalk, which I have often mentioned to you, my curiosity had formerly induced me to traverse in various directions. It was in the highest degree rugged, picturesque, and wild.

This

This vale, though I had never before viewed it by the glimpse of the moon, suggested the belief that I had visited it before. Such a one I knew belonged to this uncultivated region. If this opinion were true, we were at no inconsiderable distance from Inglefield's habitation. "Where," said I, "is this singular career to terminate?"

Though occupied with these reflections, I did not slacken my pursuit. The stranger kept along the verge of the cliff, which gradually declined till it terminated in the valley. He then plunged into its deepest thickets. In a quarter of an hour he stopped under a projecture of the rock which formed the opposite side of the vale. He then proceeded to remove the stalks, which, as I immediately perceived, concealed

concealed the mouth of a cavern. He plunged into the darkness, and in a few moments his steps were heard no more!

Hitherto my courage had supported me, but here it failed. Was this person an assassin, who was acquainted with the windings of the grotto, and who would take advantage of the dark, to execute his vengeance upon me, who had dared to pursue him to these forlorn retreats; or was he a maniac, or walker in his sleep? Whichever supposition were true, it would be rash in me to follow him. Besides, he could not long remain in these darksome recesses, unless some fatal accident should overtake him.

I seated myself at the mouth of the cave, determined patiently to wait till he should

should think proper to emerge. This opportunity of rest was exceedingly acceptable after so toilsome a pilgrimage. My pulse began to beat more slowly, and the moisture that incommoded me ceased to flow. The coolness which, for a little time, was delicious, presently increased to shivering, and I found it necessary to change my posture, in order to preserve my blood from congealing.

After I had formed a path before the cavern's mouth, by the removal of obstructions, I employed myself in walking to and fro. In this situation I saw the moon gradually decline to the horizon, and at length disappear. I marked the deepenings of the shade, and the mutations which every object successively underwent. The vale was narrow, and hemmed

hemmed in on all sides by the lofty and precipitous cliffs. The gloom deepened as the moon declined, and the faintness of starlight was all that preserved my senses from being useless to my own guidance.

I drew nearer the cleft at which this mysterious personage had entered. I stretched my hands before it, determined that he should not emerge from his den without my notice. His steps would necessarily communicate the tidings of his approach. They could not move without a noise which would be echoed to, on all sides, by the abruptnesses by which this valley was surrounded. Here, then, I continued till the day began to dawn, in momentary expectation of the stranger's reappearance.

My

My attention was at length excited by a sound that seemed to issue from the cave. I imagined that the sleeper was returning, and prepared therefore to seize him. I blamed myself for neglecting the opportunities that had already been afforded, and was determined that another should not escape. My eyes were fixed upon the entrance. The rustling increased, and presently an animal leaped forth, of what kind I was unable to discover. Heart-struck by this disappointment, but not discouraged, I continued to watch, but in vain. The day was advancing apace. At length the sun arose, and its beams glistened on the edges of the cliffs above, whose sapless stalks and rugged masses were covered with hoar-frost. I began to despair of success, but was unwilling to depart, until it was no longer possible

or in some signal disaster? But what proof had I that the same route would be taken, and that he would again inter himself alive in the same spot? Or, if he did, since his reappearance would sufficiently prove that the cavern was not dangerous, and that he who should venture in, might hope to come out again in safety, why not enter it after him?—What could be the inducements of this person to betake himself to subterranean retreats? The basis of all this region is *limestone;* a substance that eminently abounds in rifts and cavities. These, by the gradual decay of their cementing parts, frequently make their appearance in spots where they might have been least expected. My attention has often been excited by the hollow sound which was produced by my casual footsteps, and which shewed me that

that I trod upon the roof of caverns. A mountain-cave, and the rumbling of an unseen torrent, are appendages of this scene, dear to my youthful imagination. Many of romantic structure were found within the precincts of Norwalk."

These I had industriously sought out; but this had hitherto escaped my observation, and I formed the resolution of sometime exploring it. At present I determined to revisit the Elm, and dig in the spot where this person had been employed in a similar way: it might be that something was here deposited which might exhibit this transaction in a new light. At the suitable hour, on the ensuing night, I took my former stand. The person again appeared: my intention to dig was to be carried into effect on con-

dition of his absence and was consequently frustrated.

Instead of rushing on him, and breaking at once the spell by which his senses were bound, I concluded, contrary to my first design, to wait his departure, and allow myself to be conducted whithersoever he pleased. The track into which he now led me was different from the former one; it was a maze, oblique, circuitous, upward and downward, in a degree which only could take place in a region so remarkably irregular in surface, so abounding with hillocks and steeps, and pits and brooks as *Salsbury*. It seemed to be the sole end of his labours to bewilder or fatigue his pursuer, to pierce into the deepest thickets, to plunge into the darkest cavities, to ascend the most difficult heights, and approach

approach the slippery and tremulous verge of the dizziest precipices.

I disdained to be outstripped in this career; all dangers were overlooked, and all difficulties defied; I plunged into obscurities, and clambered over obstacles, from which, in a different state of mind, and with a different object of pursuit, I should have recoiled with invincible timidity. When the scene had passed, I could not review the perils I had undergone without shuddering.

At length my conductor struck into a path which, compared with the ruggedness of that which we had lately trodden, was easy and smooth. This track led us to the skirt of the wilderness, and at no long time we reached an open field, when

a dwelling appeared at a small distance, which I speedily recognised to be that belonging to Inglefield. I now anticipated the fulfilment of my predictions. My conductor directed his steps towards the barn, into which he entered by a small door.

How were my doubts removed! This was no other than Clithero Edny. There was nothing in his appearance incompatible with this conclusion. He and his fellow servant occupied an apartment in the barn as a lodging room. This arduous purpose was accomplished, and I retired to the shelter of a neighbouring shed, not so much to repose myself after the fatigues of my extraordinary journey, as to devise farther expedients.

Nothing

Nothing now remained but to take Clithero to task; to repeat to him the observations of the two last nights; to unfold to him my conjectures and suspicions; to convince him of the rectitude of my intentions; and to extort from him a disclosure of all the circumstances connected with the death of Waldegrave, which it was in his power to communicate.

In order to obtain a conference, I resolved to invite him to my uncle's, to perform a certain piece of work for me under my own eyes: he would, of course, spend the night with us, and in the evening I would make an opportunity of entering into conversation with him.

A period of the deepest deliberation was

necessary to qualify myself for performing suitably my part in this projected interview: I attended to the feelings that were suggested in this new state of my knowledge; I found reason to confide in my newly acquired equanimity.—"Remorse," said I, "is an ample and proper expiation for all offences. What does vengeance desire but to inflict misery? If misery come, its desires are accomplished: it is only the obdurate and exulting criminal that is worthy of our indignation."

It is common for pity to succeed the bitterest suggestions of resentment: if the vengeful mind be delighted with the spectacle of woes of its own contriving, at least its canine hunger is appeased, and thenceforth its hands are inactive.

On

On the evening of the next day, I paid a visit to Inglefield. I wished to impart to him the discoveries that I had made, and to listen to his reflections on the subject; I likewise desired to obtain all possible information from the family respecting the conduct of Clithero.

My friend received me with his usual kindness. Thou art no stranger to his character; thou knowest with what paternal affection I have ever been regarded by this old man; with what solicitude the wanderings of my reason and my freaks of passion, have been noted and corrected by him: thou knowest his activity to save the life of thy brother, and the hours that have been spent by him in aiding my conjectures as to the cause of his death,

and inculcating the lessons of penitence and duty.

The topics, which could not but occur at such a meeting, were quickly discussed, and I hastily proceeded to that subject which was nearest my heart; I related the adventures of the two preceding nights, and mentioned the inference to which they irresistibly led.

He said that this inference coincided with suspicions he had formed, since our last interview, in consequence of certain communications from his housekeeper. It seems the character of Clithero had, from the first, exercised the inquisitiveness of this old lady: she had carefully marked his musing and melancholy deportment;

deportment; she had tried innumerable expedients for obtaining a knowledge of his past life, and particularly of his motives for coming to America. These expedients, however profound and addressful, had failed: he took no pains to elude them; he contented himself with turning a deaf ear to all indirect allusions and hints; and, when more explicitly questioned, with simply declaring that he had nothing to communicate worthy of her notice.

During the day he was a sober and diligent workman; his evenings he spent in incommunicative silence; on Sundays he always rambled away, no one knew whither, and without a companion. I have already observed that he and his fellow servant occupied the same apart-

ment in the barn. This circumstance was not unattended to by Miss Inglefield. The name of Clithero's companion was Ambrose. This man was copiously interrogated by his mistress, and she found him by no means so refractory as the other.

Ambrose, in his tedious and confused way, related that, soon after Clithero and he had become bed-fellows, the former was considerably disturbed by restlessness and talking in his sleep. His discourse was incoherent; it was generally in the tone of expostulation, and appeared to be entreating to be saved from some great injury: such phrases as these—"have pity," "have mercy," were frequently intermingled with groans, and accompanied with weeping. Sometimes he seemed

seemed to be holding conferences with some one, who was making him considerable offers, on condition of his performing some dangerous service. What he said in his own person, and in answer to his imaginary tempter, testified the utmost reluctance.

Ambrose had no curiosity on the subject; as this interruption prevented him at first from sleeping, it was his custom to put an end to the dialogue by awakening his companion, who betrayed tokens of great alarm and dejection on discovering how he had been employed. He would solicitously enquire what were the words that he had uttered; but Ambrose's report was seldom satisfactory, because he had attended to them but little, and because he begrudged every moment in

which he was deprived of his accustomed repose.

Whether Clithero had ceased from this practice, or habit had reconciled his companion to the sounds, they no longer occasioned any interruption to his slumber.

No one appeared more shocked than he at the death of Waldegrave: after this event, his dejection suddenly increased. This symptom was observed by the family; but none but the housekeeper took the trouble to notice it to him, or build conjectures on the incident. During nights, however, Ambrose experienced a renewal of his antient disturbances He remarked that Clithero, one night, had disappeared from his side. Ambrose's range of reflection was extremely narrow: quickly

falling asleep, and finding his companion beside him when he awoke, he dismissed it from his mind.

On several ensuing nights he awakened in like manner, and always found his companion's place empty. The repetition of so strange an incident at length incited him to mention it to Clithero. The latter was confounded at this intelligence: he questioned Ambrose, with great anxiety, as to the particulars of this event; but he could gain no satisfaction from the stupid inattention of the other. From this time there was a visible augmentation of his sadness; his fits of taciturnity became more obstinate, and a deeper gloom sat upon his brow.

There was one other circumstance, of particular importance, mentioned by the

house-

house-keeper. One evening, some one on horseback stopped at this gate: he rattled at the gate with an air of authority, in token of his desire that some one would come from the house. Miss Inglefield was employed in the kitchen, from a window of which she perceived who it was that made the signal. Clithero happened, at the same moment, to be employed near her: she therefore desired him to go and see whom the stranger wanted. He laid aside his work and went. The conference lasted above five minutes. The length of it excited in her a faint degree of surprise, inducing her to leave her employment, and pay an unremitted attention to the scene: there was nothing, however, but its duration that rendered it remarkable.

Clithero

Clithero at length entered, and the traveller proceeded. The countenance of the former betrayed a degree of perturbation whichs he had never witnessed before: the muscles of his face were distorted and tremulous. He immediately sat down to his work, but he seemed, for some time, to have lost all power over his limbs: he struggled to avoid the sight of the lady; and his gestures, irresolute or misdirected, betokened the deepest dismay. After some time he recovered, in some degree, his self-possession; but, while the object was viewed through a new medium, and the change existed only in the imagination of the observer, an alteration was certainly discovered.

These circumstances were related to me by Inglefield, and corroborated by his housekeeper.

housekeeper. One consequence inevitably flowed from them:—the sleep-walker, he who had led me through so devious a tract, was no other than Clithero: there was likewise a strong relation between this person and him who stopped at the gate.—What was the subject of discourse between them? In answer to Miss Inglefield's interrogatories, he merely said that the traveller enquired whither the road led, which, at a small distance forward, struck out of the principal one. Considering the length of the interview, it was not likely that this was the only topic.

My determination to confer with him in private acquired new force from these reflections. Inglefield assented to my proposal: his own affairs would permit the

the absence of his servant for one day. I saw no necessity for delay, and immediately made my request to Clithero. I was fashioning an implement, I told him, with respect to which I could not wholly depend upon my own skill: I was acquainted with the dexterity of his contrivances, and the neatness of his workmanship. He readily consented to assist me on this occasion. Next day he came. Contrary to my expectation, he prepared to return home in the evening. I urged him to spend the night with us; but no: it was equally convenient, and more agreeable to him, to return.

I was not aware of this resolution: I might, indeed, have forseen that, being conscious of his infirmity, he would desire to avoid the scrutiny of strangers. I was painfully

painfully disconcerted; but it occurred to me that the best that could be done was to bear him company, and seize some opportunity, during this interval, of effecting my purpose. I told him that, since he would not remain, I cared not if, for the sake of recreation, and of a much more momentous purpose, I went along with him.

He tacitly, and without apparent reluctance, consented to my scheme; and accordingly we set off together.

This was an awful crisis; the time had now come that was to dissipate my uncertainty. By what means should I introduce a topic so momentous and singular? I had been qualified by no experience for rightly conducting myself on

so

so critical an emergency. My companion preserved a mournful and inviolable silence; he afforded me no opening by which I might reach the point in view: his demeanour was sedate, while I was almost disabled by the confusion of my thoughts to utter a word.

It was a dreadful charge that I was about to insinuate: I was to accuse my companion of nothing less than murder; I was to call upon him for an avowal of his guilt; I was to state the grounds of my suspicions, and desire him to confute or confirm them. In doing this, I was principally stimulated by an ungovernable curiosity; yet, if I intended not the conferring of a benefit, I did not, at least, purpose the infliction of evil: I persuaded myself that I was able to exclude from my

my bosom all sanguinary or vengeful impulses, and that, whatever should be the issue of this conversation, my equanimity would be unsubdued.

I revolved various modes of introducing the topic, by which my mind was engaged. I passed rapidly from one to another; none of them were sufficiently free from objection, to allow me to adopt it: my perplexity became every moment more painful, and my ability to extricate myself less.

In this state of uncertainty, so much time elapsed, that the Elm at length appeared in sight. This object had somewhat of a mechanical influence upon me; I stopped short, and seized the arm of my companion. Till this moment, he

appeared

appeared to have been engrossed by his own reflections, and not to have heeded those emotions which must have been sufficiently conspicuous in my looks.

This action recalled him from his reverie. The first idea that occurred to him, when he had noticed my behaviour, was, that I was assailed by some sudden indisposition.

"What is the matter!" said he, in a tone of anxiety: "are you not well?"

"Yes," replied I, "perfectly well; but stop a moment—I have something to say to you."

"To me!" answered he, with surprise.

"Yes,"

"Yes," said I: "let us turn down this path," pointing at the same time to that along which I had followed him the preceding night.

He now partook, in some degree, of my embarrassment.

"Is there any thing particular?" said he, in a doubting accent. There he stopped.

"Something," I answered, "of the highest moment. Go with me down this path—we shall be in less danger of interruption."

He was irresolute and silent; but seeing me remove the bars, and pass through them, he followed me. Nothing more

more was said till we entered the wood. I trusted to the suggestions of the moment; I had now gone too far to recede, and the necessity that pressed upon me, supplied me with words: I continued.

"This is a remarkable spot. You may wonder why I have led you to it; I ought not to keep you in suspense: there is a tale connected with it, which I am desirous of telling you; for this purpose I have brought you hither. Listen to me."

I then recapitulated the adventures of the two preceding nights: I added nothing, nor retrenched any thing. He listened in the deepest silence: from every incident, he gathered new cause of alarm: repeatedly he wiped his face with

with his handkerchief, and sighed deeply. I took no verbal notice of these symptoms. I deemed it incumbent on me to repress nothing. When I came to the concluding circumstance, by which his person was identified, he heard me without any new surprise.

To this narrative, I subjoined the enquiries that I had made at Inglefield's, and the result of those enquiries. I then continued in these words:—

"You may ask why I subjected myself to all this trouble? The mysteriousness of these transactions would have naturally suggested curiosity in any one; a transient passenger would probably have acted as I have done: but I had motives peculiar to myself. Need I remind you of a late

late disaster?—that it happened beneath the shade of this tree? Am I not justified in drawing certain inferences from your behaviour? What they are, I leave you to judge; be it your task to confute or confirm them: for this end I have conducted you hither. My suspicions are vehement: how can they be otherwise? I call upon you to say whether they be just."

The spot where we stood was illuminated by the moon, that had now risen, though all around was dark. Hence his features and person were easily distinguished. His hands hung at his side; his eyes were downcast, and he was motionless as a statue; my last words seemed scarcely to have made any impression on his sense: I had no need to

provide against the possible suggestions of revenge—I felt nothing but the tenderness of compassion. I continued, for some time, to observe him in silence, and could discover no tokens of a change of mood. I could not forbear, at last, to express my uneasiness at the fixedness of his features and attitude.

"Recollect yourself—I mean not to urge you too closely: this topic is solemn, but it need not divest you of the fortitude becoming a man."

The sound of my voice startled him. He broke from me, looked up, and fixed his eyes upon me with an expression of affright; he shuddered, and recoiled as from a spectre. I began to repent of my experiment: I could say nothing suitable

to

to this occasion; I was obliged to stand a silent and powerless spectator, and to suffer this paroxism to subside of itself. When its violence appeared to be somewhat abated, I resumed.

"I can feel for you; I act not thus in compliance with a temper that delights in the misery of others: the explanation that I have solicited, is no less necessary for your sake than for mine. You are no stranger to the light in which I viewed this man: you have witnessed the grief which his fate occasioned, and the efforts that I made to discover and drag to punishment his murderer; you heard the execrations that I heaped upon him, and my vows of eternal revenge. You expect that, having detected the offender, I will hunt him to infamy and death: you

are mistaken: I consider the deed as sufficiently expiated. I am no stranger to your gnawing cares—to the deep and incurable despair that haunts you, to which your waking thoughts are a prey, and from which sleep cannot secure you; I know the enormity of your crime, but I know not your inducements. Whatever they were, I see the consequences with regard to yourself; I see proofs of that remorse which must ever be attendant on guilt: this is enough.—Why should the effects of our misdeeds be inexhaustible? Why should we be debarred from a comforter? An opportunity of repairing our errors may, at least, be demanded from the rulers of our destiny. I once imagined that he who killed Waldegrave inflicted the greatest possible injury on me: that was an error, which reflection has

has cured. Were futurity laid open to my view, and events, with their consequences, unfolded, I might see reason to embrace the assassin as my best friend. Be comforted."

He was still incapable of speaking; but tears came to his relief. Without attending to my remonstrances, he betrayed a disposition to return. I had hitherto hoped for some disclosure, but now feared that it was designed to be withheld. He stopped not till we reached Inglefield's piazza: he then spoke for the first time, but in a hollow and tremulous voice.

"You demand of me a confession of crimes: you shall have it—sometime you shall have it; when it will be I can-

not tell: something must be done, and shortly."

He hurried from me into the house; and after a pause, I turned my steps homewards. My reflections as I proceeded perpetually revolved round a single point: these were scarcely more than a repetition, with slight variations, of a single idea.

When I awoke in the morning, I hied in fancy to the wilderness: I saw nothing but the figure of the wanderer before me; I traced his footsteps anew, retold my narrative, and pondered on his gestures and words. My condition was not destitute of enjoyment; my stormy passions had subsided into a calm portentous and awful;

awful: my soul was big with expectation; I seemed as if I were on the eve of being ushered into a world whose scenes were tremendous, but sublime: the suggestions of sorrow and malice had for a time taken their flight, and yielded place to a generous sympathy, which filled my eyes with tears, but had more in it of pleasure that of pain. That Clithero was instrumental to the death of Waldegrave—that he could furnish the clue explanatory of every bloody and mysterious event that had hitherto occurred, there was no longer the possibility of doubting.—"He indeed," said I, "is the murderer of excellence; and yet it shall be my province to emulate a father's clemency, and restore this unhappy man to purity and to peace."

Day after day passed without hearing any thing of Clithero; I began to grow uneasy and impatient: I had gained so much, and by means so unexpected, that I could more easily endure uncertainty with respect to what remained to be known: but my patience had its limits. I should, doubtless, have made use of new means to accelerate this discovery, had not his timely appearance made them superfluous.

Sunday being at length arrived, I resolved to go to Inglefield's, seek an interview with his servant, and urge him, by new importunities, to confide to me the secret. On my way thither, Clithero appeared in sight. His visage was pale and wan, and his form emaciated and shrunk. I was astonished at the alteration which the

the lapse of a week had made in his appearance. At a small distance I mistook him for a stranger: as soon as I perceived who it was, I greeted him with the utmost friendliness. My civilities made little impression on him; and he hastened to inform me that he was coming to my uncle's for the purpose of meeting and talking with me: if I thought proper we would go into the wood together, and find some spot where we might discourse at our leisure, and be exempt from interruption.

You will easily conceive with what alacrity I accepted his invitation. We turned from the road into the first path, and proceeded in silence, till the wildness of the surrounding scenery informed us that we were in the heart of Norwalk.

We lighted on a recess to which my companion appeared to be familiar, and which had all the advantages of solitude, and was suitable to rest: here we stopped. Hitherto my companion had displayed a certain degree of composure; now his countenance betokened a violent internal struggle. It was a considerable time before he could command his speech: when he had so far effected the conquest of his feelings, he began.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

"YOU call upon me for a confession of my offences.—What a strange fortune is mine! That a human being, in the present circumstances, should make this demand, and that I should be driven by an irresistible necessity to comply with it!—that here should terminate my calamitous series!—that my destiny should call upon me to lie down and die, in a region so remote from the scene of my

crimes—at a distance so great from all that witnessed and endured their consequences!

"You believe me to be an assassin—you require me to explain the motives that induced me to murder the innocent! While this is your belief, and this the scope of your expectations, you may be sure of my compliance: I could resist every demand but this.

"For what purpose have I come hither? Is it to relate my story? Shall I calmly sit here and rehearse the incidents of my life? Will my strength be adequate to this rehearsal? Let me recollect the motives that governed me when I formed this design: perhaps a strenuousness may be imparted by them, which, otherwise, I cannot hope to

to obtain. For the sake of those I consent to conjure up the ghost of the past, and to begin a tale that, with a fortitude like mine, I am not sure that I shall live to finish.

"You are unacquainted with the man before you: the inferences which you have drawn with regard to my designs and my conduct, are a tissue of destructive errors. You, like others, are blind to the most momentous consequences of your own actions; you talk of imparting consolation—you boast the beneficence of your intentions—you set yourself to do me a benefit.—What are the effects of your misguided zeal and random efforts? They have brought my life to a miserable close; they have shrouded the last scene of

of it in blood; they have put the seal to my perdition.

"My misery has been greater than has fallen to the lot of mortals: yet it is but beginning; my present path, full as it is of asperities, is better than that into which I must enter when this is abandoned. Perhaps if my pilgrimage had been longer, I might at some future day have lighted upon hope; in consequence of your interference, I am forever debarred from it: my existence is henceforward to be invariable; the woes that are reserved for me are incapable alike of alleviation or intermission.

"But I came not hither to recriminate—I came not hither to accuse others, but myself. I know the retribution that is appointed

appointed for guilt like mine: it is just. I may shudder at the foresight of my punishment, and shrink in the endurance of it; but I shall be indebted for part of my torment to the vigour of my understanding, which teaches me that my punishment is just. Why should I procrastinate my doom, and strive to render my burden more light? It is but just that it should crush me. Its procrastination is impossible: the stroke is already felt —even now I drink of the cup of retribution: a change of being cannot aggravate my woe; till consciousness itself be extinct, the worm that gnaws me will never perish.

"Fain would I be relieved from this task; gladly would I bury in oblivion the transactions of my life: but no. My fate

is uniform: the demon that controuled me at first is still in the fruition of power; I am entangled in his fold, and every effort that I make to escape only involves me in deeper ruin. I need not conceal, for all the consequences of disclosure are already experienced: I cannot endure a groundless imputation, though to free me from it I must create and justify imputations still more atrocious. My story may at least be brief: if the agonies of remembrance must be awakened afresh, let me do all that in me lies to shorten them.

"I was born in the county of Armagh. My parents were of the better sort of peasants, and were able to provide me with the rudiments of knowledge. I should doubtless have trodden in their foot-

footsteps, and have spent my life in the cultivation of their scanty fields, if an event had not happened, which, for a long time, I regarded as the most fortunate of my life; but which I now consider as the scheme of some infernal agent, and as the primary source of all my calamities.

"My father's farm was a portion of the demesne of one who resided wholly in the metropolis, and consigned the management of his estates to his stewards and retainers. This person married a lady who brought him great accession of fortune. Her wealth was her only recommendation in the eyes of her husband, whose understanding was depraved by the prejudices of luxury and rank, but was the least of her attractions in the estimate of reasonable beings.

"They

"They passed some years together. If their union were not a source of misery to the lady, she was indebted for her tranquillity to the force of her mind: she was, indeed, governed in every action of her life by the percepts of duty; while her husband listened to no calls but those of pernicious dissipation: he was immersed in all the vices that grow out of opulence and a mistaken education.

"Happily for his wife, his career was short. He was enraged at the infidelity of his mistress, to purchase whose attachment he had lavished two thirds of his fortune: he called the paramour by whom he had been supplanted, to the field; the contest was obstinate, and terminated in the death of the challenger.

"This

"This event freed the lady from many distressful and humiliating obligations. She determined to profit by her newly acquired independence—to live thenceforward conformable to her notions of right—to preserve and improve, by schemes of economy, the remains of her fortune, and to employ it in the diffusion of good. Her plans made it necessary to visit her estates in the distant provinces.

"During her abode in the manor of which my father was a vassal, she visited his cottage. I was at that time a child: she was pleased with my vivacity and promptitude, and determined to take me under her own protection. My parents joyfully acceded to her proposal; and I returned with her to the capital.

"She

"She had an only son, of my own age. Her design, in relation to me, was that I should be educated with her child, and that an affection, in this way, might be excited in me towards my young master, which might render me, when we should attain to manhood, one of his most faithful and intelligent dependants. I enjoyed, equally with him, all the essential benefits of education: there were certain accomplishments from which I was excluded, from the belief that they were unsuitable to my rank and station; I was permitted to acquire others, which, had she been actuated by true discernment, she would, perhaps, have discovered to be far more incompatible with a servile station: in proportion as my views were refined and enlarged by history and science, I was likely to contract a thirst of independence,

and

and an impatience of subjection and poverty.

"When the period of childhood and youth was past, it was thought proper to send her son to improve his knowledge and manners by a residence on the Continent. This young man was endowed with splendid abilities; his errors were the growth of his condition: all the expedients that maternal solicitude and wisdom could suggest, were employed to render him an useful citizen. Perhaps this wisdom was attested by the large share of excellence which he really possessed; and that his character was not unblemished, proved only that no exertions could preserve him from the vices that are inherent in wealth and rank, and which

which flow from the spectacle of universal depravity.

"As to me, it would be folly to deny that I had benefited by my opportunities of improvement. I fulfilled the expectation of my mistress in one respect—I was deeply imbued with affection for her son, and reverence for herself. Perhaps the force of education was evinced in those particulars, without reflecting any credit on the directors of it; those might merit the name of defects which were regarded by them as accomplishments: my unfavourable qualities, like those of my master, were imputed to my condition; though, perhaps, the difference was advantageous to me, since the vices of servitude are less hateful than those of tyranny.

"It

"It was resolved that I should accompany my master in his travels, in quality of favourite domestic. My principles, whatever might be their rectitude, were harmonious and flexible: I had devoted my life to the service of my patron; I had formed conceptions of what was really conducive to his interest, and was not to be misled by specious appearances. If my affection had not stimulated my diligence, I should have found sufficient motives in the behaviour of his mother: she condescended to express her reliance on my integrity and judgment; she was not ashamed to manifest at parting the tenderness of a mother, and to acknowledge that all her tears were not shed on her son's account. I had my part in the regrets that called them forth.

"During

"During our absence, I was my master's constant attendant. I corresponded with his mother, and made the conduct of her son the principal theme of my letters. I deemed it my privilege, as well as duty, to sit in judgment on his actions, to form my opinions without regard to selfish considerations, and to avow them whenever the avowal tended to benefit. Every letter which I wrote, particularly those in which his behaviour was freely criticised, I allowed him to peruse. I would, on no account, connive at, or participate in the slightest irregularity; I knew the duty of my station, and assumed no other controul than that which resulted from the avoiding of deceit, and the open expression of my sentiments. The youth was of a noble spirit; but his firmness was wavering: he yielded to temptations which

which a censor less rigorous than I would have regarded as venial, or, perhaps, laudable. My duty required me to set before him the consequences of his actions, and to give impartial and timely information to his mother.

"He could not brook a monitor: the more he needed reproof, the less supportable it became. My company grew every day less agreeable, till at length there appeared a necessity of parting. A separation took place, but not as enemies; I never lost his respect: in his representations to his mother, he was just to my character and services. My dismission was not allowed to injure my fortune; and his mother considered this event merely as a new proof of the inflexible consistency of my principles.

"On this change in my situation, she proposed to me to become a member of her own family. No proposal could be more acceptable: I was fully acquainted with the character of this lady, and had nothing to fear from injustice and caprice: I did not regard her with filial familiarity; but my attachment and reverence would have done honour to that relation. I performed for her the functions of a steward; her estates in the city were put under my direction. She placed boundless confidence in my discretion and integrity, and consigned to me the payment and, in some degree, the selection and government of her servants. My station was a servile one; yet most of the evils of servitude were unknown to me: my personal ease and independence were less infringed than that of those who are

accounted the freest members of society. I derived a sort of authority and dignity from the receipt and disbursement of money: the tenants and debtors of the lady were, in some respects, mine; it was, for the most part, on my justice and lenity that they depended for their treatment. My lady's household establishment was large and opulent: her servants were my inferiors and menials. My leisure was considerable, and my emoluments large enough to supply me with every valuable instrument of improvement or pleasure.

"These were reasons why I should be contented with my lot; these circumstances alone would have rendered it more eligible than any other: but it had additional and far more powerful recommendations, arising from the character of Mrs.

tion, and her skill in all the offices of politeness; but it was only for him who dwelt constantly under the same roof, to mark the inviolable consistency of her actions and opinions, the ceaseless flow of her candour, her cheerfulness, and her benevolence; it was only for one who witnessed her behaviour at all hours, in sickness and in health, her management of that great instrument of evil and good—money; her treatment of her son, her menials, and her kindred, rightly to estimate her merits.

"The intercourse between us was frequent, but of a peculiar kind. My office in her family required me often to see her, to submit schemes to her consideration, and receive her directions. At these times she treated me in a manner, in some degree,

degree, adapted to the difference of rank, and the inferiority of my station, and yet widely dissimilar from that which a different person would have adopted in the same circumstances: the treatment was not that of an equal and a friend, but still more remote was it from that of a mistress: it was merely characterized by affability and condescension; but as such it had no limits.

"She made no scruple to ask my council in every pecuniary affair, to listen to my arguments, and decide conformably to what, after sufficient canvassings and discussions, should appear to be right. When the direct occasions of our interview were dismissed, I did not of course withdraw: to detain or dismiss me was indeed at her option; but, if no engagement inter-

fered, she would enter into general conversation. There was none who could, with more safety to herself, have made the world her confessor; but the state of society in which she lived, imposed certain limitations on her candour. In her intercourse with me, there were fewer restraints than on any other occasion: my situation had made me more intimately acquainted with domestic transactions, with her views respecting her son, and with the terms on which she thought proper to stand with those whom old acquaintance or kindred gave some title to her good offices. In addition to all those motives to a candid treatment of me, there were others which owed their efficacy to her maternal regard for me, and to the artless and unsuspecting generosity of her character.

"Her

"Her hours were distributed with the utmost regularity, and appropriated to the best purposes. She selected her society without regard to any qualities but probity and talents: her associates were numerous; and her evening conversations embellished with all that could charm the senses, or instruct the understanding. This was a chosen field for the display of her magnificence; but her grandeur was without ostentation, and her gravity unmingled with haughtiness.

"From these my station excluded me; but I was compensated by the freedom of her communications in the intervals. She found pleasure in detailing to me the incidents that passed on these occasions, in rehearsing conversations, and depicting

characters. There was an uncommon portion of dramatic merit in her recitals, besides valuable and curious information.

"One uniform effect was produced in me by this behaviour: each day I thought it impossible for my attachment to receive any new accessions; yet the morrow was sure to produce some new emotion of respect or of gratitude, and to set the unrivalled accomplishments of this lady in a new and more favourable point of view. I contemplated no change in my condition: the necessity of change, whatever were the alternative, would have been a subject of piercing regret: I deemed my life a cheap sacrifice in her cause; no time would suffice to discharge the

the debt of gratitude that was due to her; yet it was continually accumulating. If an anxious thought ever invaded my bosom, it arose from this source.

"It was no difficult task faithfully to execute the functions assigned to me. No merit could accrue to me from this source: I was exposed to no temptation; I had passed the feverish period of youth: no contagious example had contaminated my principles; I had resisted the allurements of sensuality and dissipation incident to my age. My dwelling was in pomp and splendour: I had amassed sufficient to secure me, in case of unforeseen accidents, in the enjoyment of competence. My mental resources were not despicable; and the external means of

intellectual gratification were boundless. I enjoyed an unsullied reputation; my character was well known in that sphere which my lady occupied, not only by means of her favourable report, but in numberless ways in which it was my fortune to perform personal services to others."

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

"MRS. LORIMER had a twin brother. Nature had impressed the same image upon them, and had modelled them after the same pattern. The resemblance between them was exact to a degree almost incredible: in infancy and childhood they were perpetually liable to be mistaken for each other. As they grew up, nothing to a superficial examination appeared to distinguish them but the sexual characteristics. A sagacious observer would, doubtless,

doubtless, have noted the most essential differences: in all those modifications of the features which are produced by habits and sentiments, no two persons were less alike. Nature seemed to have intended them as examples of the futility of those theories which ascribe every thing to conformation and instinct, and nothing to external circumstances; in what different modes the same materials may be fashioned, and to what different purposes the same materials may be applied. Perhaps the rudiments of their intellectual character, as well as of their form, were the same; but the powers that in one case were exerted in the cause of virtue, were in [redacted] misapplied to sordid and flagitious purposes.

"Arthur

"Arthur Wiatte (that was his name) had ever been the object of his sister's affection: as long as he existed, she never ceased to labour in the promotion of his happiness. All her kindness was repaid by a stern and inexorable hatred. This man was an exception to all the rules which govern us in our judgments of human nature: he exceeded in depravity all that has been imputed to the arch-foe of mankind. His wickedness was without any of those remorseful intermissions, from which it has been supposed that the deepest guilt is not entirely exempt: he seemed to relish no food but pure, unadulterated evil; he rejoiced in proportion to the depth of that distress of which he was the author.

"His

"His sister, by being placed most within the reach of his enmity, experienced its worst effects: she was the subject on which, by being acquainted with the means of influencing her happiness, he could try his malignant experiments with most hope of success. Her parents being high in rank and wealth, the marriage of their daughter was, of course, an object of anxious attention. There is no event on which our felicity and usefulness more materially depend, and with regard to which, therefore, the freedom of choice, and the exercise of our own understanding, ought to be less infringed: but this maxim is commonly disregarded in proportion to the elevation of our rank and extent of our property.

"The

"The lady made her own election; but she was one of those who acted on a comprehensive plan, and would not admit her private inclination to dictate her decision: the happiness of others, though founded on mistaken views, she did not consider as unworthy of her regard. The choice was such as was not likely to obtain the parental sanction, to whom the moral qualities of their son-in-law, though not absolutely weightless in the balance, were greatly inferior to the considerations of wealth and dignity.

"The brother set no value on any thing but the means of luxury and power: he was astonished at that perverseness which entertained a different conception of happiness from himself. Love and friendship he considered as groundless and chimerical,

chimerical; and believed that those delusions would, in people of sense, be rectified by experience: but he knew the obstinacy of his sister's attachment to these phantoms, and that to bereave her of the good they promised, was the most effectual means of rendering her miserable. For this end he set himself to thwart her wishes. In the imbecility and false indulgence of his parents he found his most powerful auxiliaries: he prevailed upon them to forbid that union which wanted nothing but their concurrence, and their consent to endow her with a small portion of their patrimony, to render completely eligible. The cause was that of her happiness, and the happiness of him on whom she had bestowed her heart: it behoved her, therefore, to call forth all her energies in defence of

it,

it, to weaken her brother's influence on the minds of her parents, or to win him to be her advocate. When I reflect upon her mental powers, and the advantages which should seem to flow from the circumstance of pleading in the character of daughter and sister, I can scarcely believe that her attempts miscarried: I should have imagined that all obstacles would yield before her; and particularly in a case like this, in which she must have summoned all her forces, and never have believed that she had struggled sufficiently.

"Certain it is that her lot was fixed: she was not only denied the husband of her choice, but another was imposed upon her, whose recommendations were irresistible in every one's apprehension but her own. The discarded lover was treated with

with every sort of contumely: deceit and violence were employed by her brother to bring his honour, his liberty, and even his life into hazard.

"All these iniquities produced no considerable effect on the mind of the lady: the machinations to which her love was exposed would have exasperated him into madness, had not her most strenuous exertions been directed to appease him.

"She prevailed on him at length to abandon his country, though she thereby merely turned her brother's depravity into a new channel. Her parents died without consciousness of the evils they inflicted; but they experienced a bitter retribution in the conduct of their son: he was the darling and stay of an antient and illus-

trious

trious house; but his actions reflected nothing but disgrace upon his ancestry, and threatened to bring the honours of their line to a period in his person. At their death the bulk of their patrimony devolved upon him. This he speedily consumed in gaming and riot: from splendid, he descended to meaner vices. The efforts of his sister to recall him to virtue were unintermitted and fruitless: her affection for him he converted into a means of prolonging his selfish gratifications. She decided for the best; it was no argument of weakness that she was so frequently deceived: if she had judged truly of her brother, she would have judged not only without example, but in opposition to the general experience of mankind. But she was not to be for ever deceived: her tenderness was subservient

to

to justice; and when his vices had led him from the gaming-table to the highway—when seized at length by the ministers of law—when convicted and sentenced to transportation, her intercession was solicited; when all the world knew that pardon would readily be granted to a supplicant of her rank, fortune, and character—when the criminal himself, his kindred, his friends, and even indifferent persons implored her interference, her justice was inflexible: she knew full well the incurableness of his depravity; that banishment was the mildest destiny that would befal him; that estrangement from antient haunts and associates was the condition from which his true friends had least to fear.

"Finding

"Finding entreaties unavailing, the wretch delivered himself to the suggestions of his malice, and he vowed to be bloodily revenged on her inflexibility. The sentence was executed. That character must indeed be monstrous from which the execution of such threats was to be dreaded. The event sufficiently shewed that our fears on this head were well grounded: this event, however, was at a great distance. It was reported that the fellons, of whom he was one, mutinied on board the ship in which they had been embarked: in the affray that succeeded, it was said that he was killed.

"Among the nefarious deeds which he perpetrated, was to be numbered the seduction of a young lady, whose heart was broken by the detection of his perfidy.

The fruit of this unhappy union was a daughter. Her mother died shortly after her birth. Her father was careless of her destiny: she was consigned to the care of a hireling, who, happily for the innocent victim, performed the maternal offices for her own sake, and did not allow the want of a stipulated recompence to render her cruel or neglectful.

"This orphan was sought out by the benevolence of Mrs. Lorimer, and placed under her own protection. She received from her the treatment of a mother. The tie of kindred, corroborated by habit, was not the only thing that united them: that resemblance to herself which had been so deplorably defective in her brother, was completely realized in his offspring: Nature seemed to have precluded every difference

difference between them but that of age. This darling object excited in her bosom more than maternal sympathies: her soul clung to the happiness of her *Clarice* with more ardour than to that of her own son. The latter was not only less worthy of affection, but their separation necessarily diminished their mutual confidence.

"It was natural for her to look forward to the future destiny of *Clarice*. On these occasions she could not help contemplating the possibility of an union between her son and niece. Considerable advantages belonged to this scheme; yet it was the subject of hope, rather than the scope of a project. The contingencies were numerous and delicate on which the ultimate desirableness of this union depended. She was far from certain that

her son would be worthy of this benefit; or that if he were worthy, his propensities would not select for themselves a different object: it was equally dubious whether the young lady would not think proper otherwise to dispose of her affections. These uncertainties could be dissipated only by time: meanwhile she was chiefly solicitous to render them virtuous and wise.

"As they advanced in years the hopes that she had formed were annihilated. The youth was not exempt from egregious errors. In addition to this, it was manifest that the young people were disposed to regard each other in no other light than that of brother and sister. I was not unapprized of her views: I saw that their union was impossible. I was near enough to

to judge of the character of Clarice. My youth and intellectual constitution made me peculiarly susceptible to female charms. I was her playfellow in childhood, and her associate in studies and amusements at a maturer age. This situation might have been suspected of a dangerous tendency: this tendency, however, was obviated by motives of which I was for a long time scarcely conscious.

"I was habituated to consider the distinctions of rank as indelible: the obstructions that existed to any wish that I might form, were like those of time and space, and as, in their own nature, insuperable.

"Such was the state of things previous to our setting out upon our travels.

Clarice was indirectly included in our correspondence: my letters were open to her inspection; and I was sometimes honoured with a few complimentary lines under her own hand. On returning to my ancient abode, I was once more exposed to those sinister influences which absence had at least suspended. Various suitors had, meanwhile, been rejected: their character, for the most part, had been such as to account for her refusal, without resorting to the supposition of a lurking or unavowed attachment.

"On our meeting, she greeted me in a respectful, but dignified manner: observers could discover in it nothing not corresponding to that difference of fortune which subsisted between us: if her joy on that occasion had in it some portion of

of tenderness, the softness of her temper, and the peculiar circumstances in which we had been placed, being considered, the most rigid censor could find no occasion for blame or suspicion.

"A year passed away, but not without my attention being solicited by something new and inexplicable in my own sensations. At first I was not aware of their true cause; but the gradual progress of my feelings left me not long in doubt as to their origin. I was alarmed at the discovery, but my courage did not suddenly desert me. My hopes seemed to be extinguished the moment that I distinctly perceived the point to which they led. My mind had undergone a change; the ideas with which it was fraught were varied: the sight, or recollection of

Clarice, was sure to occasion it to advert to the recent discovery, and to revolve the considerations naturally connected with it. Some latent glows and secret trepidations were likewise experienced, when, by some accident, our meetings were abrupt, or our interviews unwitnessed; yet my usual tranquillity was not as yet sensibly diminished: I could bear to think of her marriage with another without painful emotions, and was anxious only that her choice should be judicious and fortunate.

"My thoughts could not long continue in this state; they gradually became more ardent and museful. The image of Clarice occurred with unseasonable frequency: its charms were enhanced by some nameless and indefinable additions: when it met

met me in the way, I was irresistibly disposed to stop and survey it with particular attention. The pathetic cast of her features, the deep glow of her cheek, and some catch of melting music she had lately breathed, stole incessantly upon my fancy. On recovering from my thoughtful moods, I sometimes found my cheeks wet with tears that had fallen unperceived, and my bosom heaved with involuntary sighs.

"These images did not content themselves with invading my wakeful hours, but, likewise, encroached upon my sleep: I could no longer resign myself to slumber with the same ease as before; when I slept, my visions were of the same impassioned tenor.

"There was no difficulty in judging rightly of my situation: I knew what it was that duty exacted from me: to remain in my present situation was a chimerical project. That time and reflection would suffice to restore me to myself, was a notion equally fallacious: yet I felt an insupportable reluctance to change it. This reluctance was owing not wholly or chiefly to my growing passion, but to the attachment which bound me to the service of my lady. All my contemplations had hitherto been modelled on the belief of my remaining in my present situation during my life; my mildest anticipations had never fashioned an event like this: any misfortune was light in comparison with that which tore me from her presence and service. But should I ultimately resolve to separate,

how

how should I communicate my purpose? The pain of parting would scarcely be less on her side than on mine. Could I consent to be the author of disquietude to her? I had consecrated all my faculties to her service. This was the recompence which it was in my power to make for the benefits that I had received. Would not this procedure bear the appearance of the basest ingratitude? The shadow of an imputation like this was more excruciating than the rack.

"What motive could I assign for my conduct? The truth must not be told: this would be equivalent to supplicating for a new benefit: it would more become me to lessen, than increase my obligations. Among all my imaginations on this subject, the possibility of a mutual passion

never occurred to me. I could not be blind to the essential distinctions that subsist among men: I could expatiate, like others, on the futility of ribbons and titles, and on the dignity that was annexed to skill and virtue; but these, for the most part, were the incoherences of speculation, and in no degree influenced the stream of my actions, and practical sentiments. The barrier that existed in the present case I deemed insurmountable: this was not even the subject of doubt. In disclosing the truth I should be conceived to be soliciting my lady's mercy and intercession; but this would be the madness of presumption. Let me impress her with any other opinion than that I go in search of the happiness that I have lost under her roof; let me save her generous

heart

heart from the pangs which this persuasion would infallibly produce.

"I could form no stable resolutions: I seemed unalterably convinced of the necessity of separation, and yet could not execute my design. When I had wrought up my mind to the intention of explaining myself on the next interview, when the next interview took place my tongue was powerless: I admitted any excuse for postponing my design, and gladly admitted any topic, however foreign to my purpose.

"It must not be imagined that my health sustained no injury from this conflict of my passions: my patroness perceived this alteration; she enquired with the most affectionate solicitude into

the cause: it could not be explained. I could safely make light of it, and represent it as something which would probably disappear of itself, as it originated without any adequate cause. She was obliged to acquiesce in my imperfect account.

"Day after day passed in this state of fluctuation. I was conscious of the dangers of delay, and that procrastination, without rendering the task less necessary, augmented its difficulties. At length, summoning my resolution, I demanded an audience. She received me with her usual affability. Common topics were started; but she saw the confusion and trepidation of my thoughts, and quickly relinquished them. She then noticed to me what she had observed, and mentioned the anxiety which these appearances had given

given her: she reminded me of the maternal regard which she had always manifested towards me, and appealed to my own heart whether any thing could be said in vindication of that reserve with which I had lately treated her, and urged me, as I valued her good opinion, to explain the cause of a dejection *that was too visible.*

"To all this I could make but one answer:—'Think me not, Madam, perverse or ungrateful. I came just now to apprize you of a resolution that I had formed: I cannot explain the motives that induce me. In this case, to lie to you would be unpardonable; and since I cannot assign my true motives, I will not mislead you by false representations. I came to inform you of my intention to leave your service, and

and to retire, with the fruits of your bounty, to my native village, where I shall spend my life, I hope, in peace.'

" Her surprise at this declaration was beyond measure: she could not believe her ears; she had not heard me rightly: she compelled me to repeat it; still I was jesting; I could not possibly mean what my words imported.

" I assured her, in terms still more explicit, that my resolution was taken, and was unalterable; and again entreated her to spare me the task of assigning my motives.

" This was a strange determination. What could be the grounds of this new scheme? What could be the necessity of hiding

hiding them from her? This mystery was not to be endured; she could by no means away with it: she thought it hard that I should abandon her at this time, when she stood in particular need of my assistance and advice: she would refuse nothing to make my situation eligible; I had only to point out where she was deficient in her treatment of me, and she would endeavour to supply it: she was willing to augment my emoluments in any degree that I desired: she could not think of parting with me; but, at any rate, she must be informed of my motives.

'It is a hard task,' answered I, 'that I have imposed upon myself: I foresaw its difficulties, and this foresight has hitherto prevented me from undertaking it; but the necessity by which I am impelled

impelled will no longer be withstood. I am determined to go; but to say why is impossible. I hope I shall not bring upon myself the imputation of ingratitude; but this imputation, more intolerable than any other, must be borne, if it cannot be avoided but by this disclosure.'

'Keep your motives to yourself,' said she: 'I have too good an opinion of you to suppose that you would practise concealment without good reason. I merely desire you to remain where you are. Since you will not tell me why you take up this new scheme, I can only say that it is impossible there should be any advantage in it: I will not hear of it, I tell you; therefore submit to my decree with a good grace.'

"Not-

"Notwithstanding this prohibition, I persisted in declaring that my determination was fixed, and that the motives which governed me would allow of no alternative.

'So, you will go, will you, whether I will or no? I have no power to detain you? You will regard nothing that I can say?'

'Believe me, Madam, no resolution ever was formed after a more vehement struggle. If my motives were known, you would not only cease to oppose, but would hasten my departure. Honour me so far with your good opinion as to believe that in saying this I say nothing but the truth, and render my duty less burden-

burdensome by cheerfully acquiescing in its dictates.'

'I would,' replied my lady, 'I could find somebody that has more power over you than I have. Whom shall I call in to aid me in this arduous task?'

'Nay, dear Madam, if I can resist your entreaties, surely no other can hope to succeed.'

'I am not sure of that,' said my friend, archly: 'there is one person in the world whose supplications, I greatly suspect, you would not withstand.'

'Whom do you mean?' said I, in some trepidation.

'You

'You will know presently: unless I can prevail upon you, I shall be obliged to call for assistance.'

'Spare me the pain of repeating that no power on earth can change my resolution.'

'That's a fib!' she rejoined, with increased archness; 'you know it is: if a certain person entreat you to stay, you will easily comply. I see I cannot hope to prevail by my own strength: that is a mortifying consideration; but we must not part—that is a point settled. If nothing else will do, I must go and fetch my advocate. Stay here a moment.'

"I had scarcely time to breathe before she returned, leading in Clarice. I did not

not yet comprehend the meaning of this ceremony. The lady was overwhelmed with sweet confusion. Averted eyes and reluctant steps might have explained to me the purpose of this meeting, if I had believed that purpose to be possible. I felt the necessity of new fortitude, and struggled to recollect the motives that had hitherto sustained me.

'There,' said my patroness, 'I have been endeavouring to persuade this young man to live with us a little longer: he is determined, it seems, to change his abode; he will not tell why, and I do not care to know, unless I could shew his reasons to be groundless: I have merely remonstrated with him on the folly of his scheme, but he has proved refractory to all

all I can say: perhaps your efforts may meet with better success.'

"Clarice said not a word: my own embarrassment equally disabled me from speaking. Regarding us both, for some time, with a benign aspect, Mrs. Lorimer resumed, taking a hand of each, and joining them together.

'I very well know what it was that suggested this scheme: it is strange that you should suppose me so careless an observer as not to note, or not to understand your situation: I am as well acquainted with what is passing in your heart as you yourself are; but why are you so anxious to conceal it? You know less of the adventurousness of love than I should have suspected: but I will not

trifle with your feelings. You, Clithero, know the wishes that I once cherished: I had hoped that my son would have found, in this darling child, an object worthy of his choice, and that my girl would have preferred him to all others; but I have long since discovered that this could not be—they are nowise suited to each other. There is one thing, in the next place, desirable, and now my wishes are accomplished: I see that you love each other; and never, in my opinion, was a passion more rational and just: I should think myself the worst of beings if I did not contribute all in my power to your happiness. There is not the shadow of objection to your union: I know your scruples, Clithero, and am sorry to see that you harbour them for a moment; nothing is more unworthy of your good sense.

sense. I found out this girl long ago: take my word for it, young man, she does not fall short of you in the purity and tenderness of her attachment. What need is there of tedious preliminaries? I will leave you together, and hope you will not be long in coming to a mutual understanding: your union cannot be completed too soon for my wishes. Clarice is my only and darling daughter. As to you, Clithero, expect henceforth that treatment from me, not only to which your own merit entitles you, but which is due to the husband of my daughter.'

"With these words she retired, and left us together.

"Great God! deliver me from the torments of this remembrance! That a being, by whom

whom I was snatched from penury and brutal inorance, exalted to some rank in the intelligent creation, reared to affluence and honour, and thus, at last, spontaneously endowed with all that remained to complete the sum of my felicity—that a being like this——but such thoughts must not yet be—I must shut them out, or I shall never arrive at the end of my tale. My efforts have been thus far successful; I have hitherto been able to deliver a coherent narrative: let the last words that I shall speak afford some glimmering of my better days—let me execute without faltering the only task that remains for me!"

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

"HOW propitious, how incredible was this event! I could scarcely confide in the testimony of my senses. Was it true that Clarice was before me—that she was prepared to countenance my presumption—that she had slighted obstacles which I had deemed insurmountable—that I was fondly beloved by her, and should shortly be admitted to the possession of so inestimable a good? I will not repeat the terms

in which I poured forth, at her feet, the raptures of my gratitude: my impetuosity soon extorted from Clarice a confirmation of her mother's declaration. An unrestrained intercourse was thenceforth established between us: dejection and languor gave place, in my bosom, to the irradiations of joy and hope; my flowing fortunes seemed to have attained their utmost and immutable height.

"Alas! they were destined to ebb with unspeakably greater rapidity, and to leave me, in a moment, stranded and wrecked!

"Our nuptials would have been solemnized without delay, had not a melancholy duty interfered. Clarice had a friend in a distant part of the kingdom: her health had long been the prey of a consumption:

sumption: she was now evidently tending to dissolution. In this extremity she entreated her friend to afford her the consolation of her presence: the only wish that remained was to die in her arms.

"This request could not but be willingly complied with: it became me patiently to endure the delay that would thence arise to the completion of my wishes: considering the urgency and mournfulness of the occasion, it was impossible for me to murmur; and the affectionate Clarice would suffer nothing to interfere with the duty which she owed to her dying friend.

"I accompanied her on this journey, remained with her a few days, and then parted from her to return to the metro-

polis. It was not imagined that it would be necessary to prolong her absence beyond a month. When I bade her farewell, and informed her on what day I proposed to return for her, I felt no decay or my satisfaction; my thoughts were bright and full of exultation. Why was not some intimation afforded me of the snares that lay in my path? In the train laid for my destruction, the agent had so skilfully contrived that my security was not molested by the faintest omen.

"I hasten to the crisis of my tale: I am almost dubious of my strength; the nearer I approach to it, the stronger is my aversion; my courage, instead of gathering force as I proceed, decays. I am willing to dwell still longer on preliminary circumstances; there are other incidents,

incidents, without which my story would be lame: I retail them, because they afford me a kind of respite from horrors, at the thought of which every joint in my frame trembles: they must be endured; but that infirmity may be forgiven which makes me inclined to procrastinate my suffering.

"I mentioned the lover whom my patroness was compelled, by the machinations of her brother, to discard. More than twenty years had passed since their separation. His birth was mean, and he was without fortune: his profession was that of a surgeon. My lady not only prevailed upon him to abandon his country, but enabled him to do this by supplying his necessities from her own purse. His excellent understanding was,

for a time, obscured by passion; but it was not difficult for my lady ultimately to obtain his concurrence to all her schemes. He saw and adored the rectitude of her motives, did not disdain to accept her gifts, and projected means for maintaining an epistolary intercourse during their separation.

"Her interest procured him a post in the service of the East India Company. She was, from time to time, informed of his motions. A war broke out between the Company and some of the native Powers: he was present at a great battle, in which the English were defeated: she could trace him by his letters and by other circumstances thus far; but here the thread was discontinued, and no means which she employed could procure any tidings of him:

him: whether he was captive or dead, continued for several years to be merely matter of conjecture.

"On my return to Dublin, I found my patroness engaged in conversation with a stranger. She introduced us to each other in a manner that indicated the respect which she entertained for us both. I surveyed and listened to him with considerable attention: his aspect was noble and ingenuous; but his sunburnt and rugged features bespoke a various and boisterous pilgrimage: the furrows of his brow were the products of vicissitude and hardship, rather than of age: his accents were fiery and energetic; and the empassioned boldness of his address, as well as the tenor of his discourse, full of allusions to the past, and regrets

that the course of events had not been different, made me suspect something extraordinary in his character.

"As soon as he left us, my Lady explained who he was:—he was no other than the object of her youthful attachment, who had, a few days before, dropped among us as from the skies. He had a long and various story to tell: he had accounted for his silence by enumerating the incidents of his life.—He had escaped from the prisons of Hyder; had wandered on foot, and under various disguises, through the northern district of Hindostan: he was sometimes a scholar of Benares, and sometimes a disciple of the Mosque; according to the exigencies of the times, he was a pilgrim to Mecca or to Jagunaut. By a long, circuitous, and perilous

perilous route, he at length arrived at the Turkish capital. Here he resided for several years, deriving a precarious subsistence from the profession of a surgeon. He was obliged to desert this post, in consequence of a duel between two Scotchmen. One of them had embraced the Greek religion, and was betrothed to the daughter of a wealthy trader of that nation: he perished in the conflict; and the family of the lady not only procured the execution of his antagonist, but threatened to involve all those who were known to be connected with him, in the same ruin.

" His life being thus endangered, it became necessary for him to seek a new residence. He fled from Constantinople with such precipitation as reduced him to

the lowest poverty: he had traversed the Indian conquests of Alexander as a mendicant—in the same character he now wandered over the native country of Philip and Philopœmen: he passed safely through multiplied perils; and finally, embarking at Salonichi, he reached Venice: he descended through the passes of the Appenines into Tuscany. In this journey he suffered a long detention from banditti, by whom he was waylaid. In consequence of his harmless deportment, and a seasonable display of his chirurgical skill, they granted him his life, though they for a time restrained him of his liberty, and compelled him to endure their society.

"The time was not misemployed which he spent immured in caverns and

carousing with robbers: his details were eminently singular and curious, and evinced the acuteness of his penetration, as well as the steadfastness of his courage.

"After emerging from these wilds, he found his way along the banks of the Arno to Leghorn: thence he procured a passage to America; whence he had just returned, with many additions to his experience, but none to his fortune.

"This was a remarkable event: it did not at first appear how far its consequences would extend: the lady was, at present, disengaged and independent; though the passion which clouded her early prosperity was extinct, time had not diminished the worth of her friend, and they were far from having reached that

age when love becomes chimerical and marriage folly. A confidential intercourse was immediately established between them. The bounty of Mrs. Lorimer soon divested her friend of all fear of poverty.—'At any rate,' said she, 'he shall wander no further, but shall be comfortably situated for the rest of his life.'

" All his scruples were vanquished by the reasonableness of her remonstrances, and the vehemence of her solicitations.'

" A cordial intimacy grew between me and the newly arrived: our interviews were frequent, and our communications without reserve. He detailed to me the result of his experience, and expatiated without end on the history of his actions and

and opinions: he related the adventures of his youth, and dwelt upon all the circumstances of his attachment to my patroness. On this subject I had heard only general details: I continually found cause, in the course of his narrative, to revere the illustrious qualities of my lady; and to weep at the calamities to which the infernal malice of her brother had subjected her.

"The tale of that man's misdeeds, amplified and dramatised by the indignant eloquence of this historian, oppressed me with astonishment: if a poet had drawn such a portrait, I should have been prone to suspect the soundness of his judgment. Till now, I had imagined that no character was uniform and unmixed; and my theory of the passions did not enable me

me to account for a propensity gratified merely by evil, and delighting in shrieks and agony for their own sake.

"It was natural to suggest to my friend, when expatiating on this theme, an enquiry as to how far subsequent events had obliterated the impressions that were then made, and as to the plausibility of reviving, at this most auspicious period, his claims on the heart of his friend. When he thought proper to notice these hints, he gave me to understand that time had made no essential alterations in his sentiments in this respect—that he still fostered a hope, to which every day added new vigour, that whatever was the ultimate event, he trusted in his fortitude to sustain it, if adverse, and in his wisdom

to

to extract from it the most valuable consequences, if it should prove prosperous.

"The progress of things was not unfavourable to his hopes: she treated his insinuations and professions with levity; but her arguments seemed to be urged with no other view than to afford an opportunity of confutation; and, since there was no abatement of familiarity and kindness, there was room to hope that the affair would terminate agreeably to his wishes."

CHAP. VII.

"CLARICE, meanwhile, was absent. Her friend seemed, at the end of a month, to be little less distant from the grave than at first. My impatience would not allow me to wait till her death: I visited her; but was once more obliged to return alone. I arrived late in the city; and being greatly fatigued, I retired almost immediately to my chamber.

"On

"On hearing of my arrival, Sarsefield hastened to see me. He came to my bedside; and such, in his opinion, was the importance of the tidings which he had to communicate, that he did not scruple to rouse me from a deep sleep."

At this period of his narrative, Clithero stopped: his complexion varied from one degree of paleness to another; his brain appeared to suffer some severe constriction: he desired to be excused for a few minutes from proceeding. In a short time he was relieved from this paroxism, and resumed his tale with an accent tremulous at first, but acquiring stability and force as he went on.

"On waking, as I have said, I found my friend seated at my bedside: his countenance

countenance exhibited various tokens of alarm. As soon as I perceived who it was, I started, exclaiming—'What is the matter?'

"He sighed.

'Pardon,' said he, 'this unseasonable intrusion! a light matter would not have occasioned it. I have waited for two days past in an agony of impatience for your return: happily you are at last come. I stand in the utmost need of your council and aid.'

'Heaven defend!' cried I: 'this is a terrible prelude. You may, of course, rely upon my assistance and advice: what is it that you have to propose?'

'Tuesday

'Tuesday evening,' he answered, 'I spent here. It was late before I returned to my lodgings. I was in the act of lifting my hand to the bell, when my eye was caught by a person standing close to the wall, at the distance of ten paces: his attitude was that of one employed in watching my motions; his face was turned towards me, and happened, at that moment, to be fully illuminated by the rays of a globe-lamp that hung over the door. I instantly recognised his features —I was petrified—I had no power to execute my design, or even to move, but stood for some seconds gazing upon him. He was, in no degree, disconcerted by the eagerness of my scrutiny; he seemed perfectly indifferent to the consequences of being known. At length he slowly turned his eyes to another quarter, but without

without changing his posture, or the sternness of his looks. I cannot describe to you the shock which this encounter produced in me. At last I went into the house, and have ever since been excessively uneasy.'

'I do not see any ground for uneasiness.'

'You do not then suspect who this person is?'

'No.'

'It is Arthur Wiatte.'

'Good Heaven! it is impossible! What, my Lady's brother?'

'The same.'

'It cannot be! Were we not assured of his death—that he perished in a mutiny on

on board the vessel in which he was embarked for transportation?'

'Such was rumour, which is easily mistaken: my eyes cannot be deceived in this case; I should as easily fail to recognise his sister, when I first met her, as him: this is the man, whether once dead or not, he is, at present, alive, and in this city.'

'But has any thing since happened to confirm you in this opinion?'

'Yes, there has. As soon as I had recovered from my first surprise, I began to reflect upon the measures proper to be taken. This was the identical Arthur Wiatte—you know his character: no time was likely to change the principles of

of such a man; but his appearance sufficiently betrayed the incurableness of his habits: the same sullen and atrocious passions were written in his visage. You recollect the vengeance which Wiatte denounced against his sister: there is every thing to dread from his malignity. How to obviate the danger I know not: I thought, however, of one expedient; it might serve a present purpose, and something better might suggest itself on your return.—I came hither early the next day. Old Gowan, the porter, is well acquainted with Wiatte's story: I mentioned to him that I had reason to think that he had returned; I charged him to have a watchful eye upon every one that knocked at the gate, and that if this person should come, by no means to admit him. The old man promised faithfully to abide by

my

my directions: his terrors, indeed, were greater than mine, and he knew the importance of excluding Wiatte from these walls.'

'Did you not inform my Lady of this?'

'No. In what way could I tell it to her? What end could it answer? Why should I make her miserable? But I have not done. Yesterday morning Gowan took me aside, and informed me that Wiatte had made his appearance the day before at the gate. He knew him, he said, in a moment. He demanded to see the lady; but the old man told him she was engaged, and could not be seen. He assumed peremptory and haughty airs, and asserted that his business was of such importance as not to endure a moment's delay. Gowan persisted

persisted in his first refusal. He retired with great reluctance; but said he should return to-morrow, when he should insist upon admission to the presence of the lady. I have enquired, and find that he has not repeated his visit. What is to be done?'

"I was equally at a loss with my friend, this accident was so unlooked for. What might not be dreaded from the monstrous depravity of Wiatte? His menaces of vengeance against his sister still rung in my ears: some means of eluding them were indispensible. Could law be resorted to? Against an evil like this, no legal provision had been made: nine years had elapsed since his transportation—seven years was the period of his exile; in returning, therefore, he had committed no crime: his

his person could not be lawfully molested, we were justified merely in repelling an attack. But suppose we should appeal to law, could this be done without the knowledge and concurrence of his sister? She would never permit it; her heart was incapable of fear from this quarter: she would spurn at the mention of precautions against the hatred of her brother; her inquietude would merely be awakened on his own account.

"I was overwhelmed with perplexity: perhaps if he were sought out, and some judgment formed of the kind of danger to be dreaded from him, by a knowledge of his situation and views, some expedient might be thence suggested.

"But how should his haunts be dis-

covered? This was easy: he had intimated the design of applying again for admission to his sister. Let a person be stationed at hand, who, being furnished with an adequate description of his person and dress, shall mark him when he comes, and follow him when he retires, and forthwith impart to us the information on that head which he shall be able to collect.

"My friend concurred in this scheme: no better could, for the present, be suggested. Here ended our conference.

"I was thus supplied with a new subject of reflection; it was calculated to fill my mind with dreary forebodings: the future was no longer a scene of security and pleasure: it would be hard for those

to

to partake of our fears, who did not partake of our experience. The existence of Wiatte was the canker that had blasted the felicity of my patroness: in his re-appearance on the stage there was something portentous; it seemed to include in it consequences of the utmost moment, without my being able to discover what these consequences were.

"That Sarsefield should be so quickly followed by his arch-foe—that they started anew into existence, without any previous intimation, in a manner wholly unexpected, and at the same period: it seemed as if there lurked under those appearances a tremendous significance, which human sagacity could not uncover. My heart sunk within me when I reflected that this was the father of my Clarice—he by whose

cruelty her mother was torn from the enjoyment of untarnished honour, and consigned to infamy and an untimely grave—he by whom herself was abandoned in the helplessness of infancy, and left to be the prey of obdurate avarice, and the victim of wretches who traffic in virgin innocence, who had done all that in him lay to devote her youth to guilt and misery. What were the limits of his power? How may he exert the parental prerogatives?

"To sleep while these images were haunting me, was impossible: I passed the night in continual motion; I strode, without ceasing, across the floor of my apartment; my mind was wrought to a higher pitch than I had ever before experienced. The occasion, accurately considered, was

far

far from justifying the ominous inquietudes which I then felt:—how then should I account for them?

"Sarsefield probably enjoyed his usual slumber: his repose might not be perfectly serene; but when he ruminated on impending or possible calamities, his tongue did not cleave to his mouth, his throat was not parched with unquenchable thirst, he was not incessantly stimulated to employ his superfluous fertility of thought in motion: if I trembled for the safety of her whom I loved, and whose safety was endangered by being the daughter of this miscreant, had he not equal reason to fear for her whom he also loved, and who, as the sister of this ruffian, was encompassed by the most alarming

perils? Yet he probably was calm while I was harassed by anxieties.

"Alas! the difference was easily explained! Such was the beginning of a series ordained to hurry me to swift destruction—such were the primary tokens of the presence of that power by whose accursed machinations I was destined to fall. You are startled at this declaration; it is one to which you have been little accustomed: perhaps you regard it merely as an effusion of frenzy. I know what I am saying; I do not build upon conjectures and surmises: I care not indeed for your doubts; your conclusion may be fashioned at your pleasure. Would to Heaven that my belief were groundless, and that I had no reason to believe my intellects

intellects to have been perverted by diabolical instigations!

"I could procure no sleep that night; after Sarsefield's departure I did not even lie down: it seemed to me that I could not obtain the benefits of repose otherwise than by placing my Lady beyond the possibility of danger.

"I met Sarsefield the next day. In pursuance of the scheme which had been adopted by us on the preceding evening, a person was selected and commissioned to watch the appearance of Wiatte. The day passed as usual with respect to the lady: in the evening she was surrounded by a few friends. Into this number I was now admitted; Sarsefield and myself made a part of this company. Various

topics were discussed with ease and sprightliness: her societies were composed of both sexes, and seemed to have monopolized all the ingenuity and wit that existed in the metropolis.

"After a slight repast the company dispersed. This separation took place earlier than usual, on account of a slight indisposition in *Mrs. Lorimer.* Sarsefield and I went out together: we took that opportunity of examining our agent, and receiving no satisfaction from him, we dismissed him for that night, enjoining him to hold himself in readiness for repeating the experiment to-morrow. My friend directed his steps homeward, and I proceeded to execute a commission with which I had charged myself.

"A few

"A few days before a large sum had been deposited in the hands of a banker for the use of my Lady: it was the amount of a debt which had lately been recovered, and was lodged here for the purpose of being paid on demand of her or her agents. It was my present business to receive this money: I had deferred the performance of this engagement to so late an hour, on account of certain preliminaries which were necessary to be adjusted.

"Having received this money, I prepared to return home. The inquietude which had been occasioned by Sarsefield's intelligence had not incapacitated me from performing my usual daily occupations: it was a theme to which, at every interval of leisure from business or discourse, I did not fail to return. At these

times I employed myself in examining the subject on all sides; in supposing particular emergencies, and delineating the conduct that was proper to be observed on each. My daily thoughts were, by no means, so fear-inspiring as the meditations of the night had been.

"As soon as I left the banker's door my meditations fell into this channel: I again reviewed the recent occurrences, and imagined the consequences likely to flow from them. My deductions were not, on this occasion, peculiarly distressful. The return of darkness had added nothing to my apprehensions; I regarded Wiatte merely as one against whose malice it was wise to employ the most vigilant precautions: in revolving these precautions nothing occurred that was new; the danger

danger appeared without unusual aggravations, and the expedients that offered themselves to my choice, were viewed with a temper not more sanguine or despondent than before.

In this state of mind I began, and continued my walk. The distance was considerable between my own habitation and that which I had left: my way lay chiefly through populous and well-frequented streets: in one part of the way, however, it was at the option of the passenger either to keep along the large streets, or considerably to shorten the journey by turning into a dark, crooked, and narrow lane. Being familiar with every part of this metropolis, and deeming it advisable to take the shortest and obscurest road, I turned into the alley;

I proceeded without interruption to the next turning: one night officer, distinguished by his usual ensigns, was the only person who passed me. I had gone three steps beyond when I perceived a man by my side: I had scarcely time to notice this circumstance, when a hoarse voice exclaimed—' D—n ye, villain—ye're a dead man!'

" At the same moment a pistol flashed at my ear, and a report followed. This, however, produced no other effect than, for a short space, to overpower my senses: I staggered back, but did not fall.

" The ball, as I afterwards discovered, had grazed my forehead, but without making any dangerous impression. The assassin, perceiving that his pistol had

been ineffectual, muttered, in an enraged tone—'This shall do your business!'—At the same time he drew a knife forth from his bosom.

"I was able to distinguish this action by the rays of a distant lamp, which glistened on the blade. All this passed in an instant; the attack was so abrupt, that my thoughts could not be suddenly recalled from the confusion into which they were thrown: my exertions were mechanical, my will might be said to be passive, and it was only by retrospect, and a contemplation of consequences, that I became fully informed of the nature of the scene.

"If my assailant had disappeared as soon as he had discharged the pistol, my state of extreme surprise might have slowly given

given place to resolution and activity; as it was, my sense was no sooner struck by the reflection from the blade, than my hand, as if by spontaneous energy, was thrust into my pocket: I drew forth a pistol—he lifted up his weapon to strike, but it dropped from his powerless fingers: he fell; and his groans informed me that I had managed my arms with more skill than my adversary.

"The noise of this encounter soon attracted spectators: lights were brought, and my antagonist discovered bleeding at my feet. I explained, as briefly as I was able, the scene which they witnessed. The prostrate person was raised by two men, and carried into a public-house at hand.

"I had

"I had not lost my presence of mind—I at once perceived the propriety of administering assistance to the wounded man; I dispatched, therefore, one of the by-standers for a surgeon of considerable eminence, who lived at a small distance, and to whom I was well known. The man was carried into an inner apartment, and laid upon the floor. It was not till now that I had a suitable opportunity of ascertaining who it was with whom I had been engaged. I now looked upon his face: the paleness of death could not conceal his well-known features—it was Wiatte himself who was breathing his last groans at my feet!

"The surgeon whom I had summoned, attended; but immediately perceived the condition of his patient to be hopeless: in

in a quarter of an hour he expired. During this interval, he was insensible to all around him. I was known to the surgeon, the landlord, and some of the witnesses: the case needed little explanation; the accident reflected no guilt upon me; the landlord was charged with the care of the corpse till the morning, and I was allowed to return home without further impediment.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

"'TILL now my mind had been swayed by the urgencies of this occasion: these reflections were excluded, which rushed tumultuously upon me the moment I was at leisure to receive them. Without foresight of a previous moment, an entire change had been wrought in my condition.

"I had been oppressed with a sense of the danger that flowed from the existence of

of this man: by what means the peril could be annihilated, and we be placed in security from his attempts, no efforts of mind could suggest. To devise these means, and employ them with success, demanded, as I conceived, the most powerful sagacity and the firmest courage. Now the danger was no more; the intelligence, in which plans of mischief might be generated, was extinguished or flown; lifeless were the hands ready to execute the dictates of that intelligence; the contriver of enormous evil was, in one moment, bereft of the power and the will to injure. Our past tranquillity had been owing to the belief of his death: fear and dismay had resumed their dominion when the mistake was discovered; but now we might regain possession of our wonted confidence—I had beheld with my own

eyes

eyes the lifeless corpse of our implacable adversary:—thus, in a moment, had terminated his long and flagitious career; his restless indignation, his malignant projects, that had so long occupied the stage, and been so fertile of calamity, were now at an end!

"In the course of my meditations the idea of the death of this man had occurred, and it bore the appearance of a desirable event; yet it was little qualified to tranquillize my fears. In the long catalogue of contingencies this, indeed, was to be found; but it was as little likely to happen as any other; it could not happen without a series of anterior events paving the way for it; if his death came from us, it must be the result

of

of design—it must spring from laborious circumvention and deep-laid stratagems.

"No: he was dead—I had killed him: what had I done? I had meditated nothing; I was impelled by an unconscious necessity: had the assailant been my father, the consequence would have been the same; my understanding had been neutral. Could it be? In a space so short was it possible that so tremendous a deed had been executed? Was I not deceived by some portentous vision? I had witnessed the convulsions and last agonies of Wiatte—he was no more, and I was his destroyer!

"Such was the state of my mind for some time after this dreadful event. Previously

viously to it I was calm, considerate, and self-collected; I marked the way that I was going; passing objects were observed; if I adverted to the series of my own reflections, my attention was not seized and fastened by them—I could disengage myself at pleasure, and could pass, without difficulty, from attention to the world within to the contemplation of that without.

"Now my liberty, in this respect, was at an end: I was fettered, confounded, smitten with excess of thought, and laid prostrate with wonder! I no longer attended to my steps.

"When I emerged from my stupor, I found that I had trodden back the way which I had lately come, and had arrived within

within sight of the banker's door. I checked myself, and once more turned my steps homeward.

"This seemed to be a hint for entering into new reflections.—'The deed,' said I, 'is irretrievable—I have killed the brother of my patroness, the father of my love!'

"This suggestion was new: it instantly involved me in terror and perplexity.—'How shall I communicate the tidings? What effect will they produce? My Lady's sagacity is obscured by the benevolence of her temper: her brother was sordidly wicked, a hoary ruffian, to whom the language of pity was as unintelligible as the gabble of monkeys: his heart was fortified against compunction by the atro-

cious

cious habits of forty years; he lived only to interrupt her peace, to confute the promises of virtue, and convert to rancour and reproach the fair fame of fidelity.

"He was her brother still. As a human being, his depravity was never beyond the health-restoring power of repentance; his heart, so long as it beat, was accessible to remorse. The singularity of his birth had made her regard this being as more intimately her brother than would have happened in different circumstances: it was her obstinate persuasion that their fates were blended. The rumour of his death she had never credited: it was a topic of congratulation to her friends, but of mourning and distress to her. That he would one day reappear upon the stage, and assume the dignity

dignity of virtue, was a source of consolation with which she would never consent to part.

"Her character was now known. When the doom of exile was pronounced upon him, she deemed it incumbent on her to vindicate herself from aspersions founded on misconceptions of her motives in refusing her interference. The manuscript, though unpublished, was widely circulated: none could resist her simple and touching eloquence, nor rise from the perusal without resigning his heart to the most impetuous impulses of admiration, and enlisting himself among the eulogists of her justice and her fortitude. This was the only monument, in a written form, of her genius: as such, it was engraven on my memory; the picture that

that it described was the perpetual companion of my thoughts.

"Alas! it had perhaps been well for me if it had been buried in eternal oblivion! I read in it the condemnation of my deed, the agonies she was preparing to suffer, and the indignation that would overflow upon the author of so signal a calamity.

"I had rescued my life by the sacrifice of his; whereas I should have died. Wretched and precipitate coward! What had become of my boasted gratitude? Such was the zeal that I had vowed to her—such the services which it was the business of my life to perform! I had snatched her brother from existence—I had torn from her the hope which she so

ardently and indefatigably cherished—from a contemptible and dastardly regard to my own safety, I had failed in the moment of trial, and when called upon by Heaven to evince the sincerity of my professions!

"She had treated my professions lightly; my vows of eternal devotion she had rejected with lofty disinterestedness; she had arraigned my impatience of obligation as criminal, and condemned every scheme I had projected for freeing myself from the burden which her beneficence had laid upon me. The impassioned and vehement anxiety with which, in former days, she had deprecated the vengeance of her lover against Wiatte, rung in my ears: my senses were shocked anew by the dreadful sounds—'Touch not my brother:

brother: wherever you meet with him, of whatever outrage he be guilty, suffer him to pass in safety: despise me—abandon me—kill me—all this I can bear even from you; but spare, I implore you, my unhappy brother: the stroke that deprives him of life will not only have the same effect upon me, but will set my portion in everlasting misery!'

"To these supplications I had been deaf: it is true I had not rushed upon him unarmed, intending no injury nor expecting any: of that degree of wickedness I was, perhaps, incapable. Alas! I have immersed myself sufficiently deep in crimes—I have trampled under foot every motive dear to the heart of honour—I have shewn myself unworthy the society of men!

" Such were the turbulent suggestions of that moment. My pace slackened—I stopped, and was obliged to support myself against a wall; the sickness that had seized my heart penetrated every part of my frame. There was but one thing wanting to complete my distraction:—' My Lady,' said I, ' believed her fate to be blended with that of Wiatte:—who shall affirm that the persuasion is a groundless one? She had lived and prospered, notwithstanding the general belief that her brother was dead: she would not hearken to the rumour—Why? Because nothing less than indubitable evidence would suffice to convince her?—because the counter-intimation flowed from an infallible source? How can the latter supposition be confuted? Has she not predicted the event? The period of terrible fulfilment

has arrived: the same blow that bereaved *him* of life, has likewise ratified her doom. She has been deceived: it is nothing more, perhaps, than a fond imagination—it matters not:—who knows not the cogeny of faith?—that the pulses of life are at the command of the will? The bearer of these tidings will be the messenger of death—a fatal sympathy will seize her—she will shrink, and swoon, and perish at the news! Fond and short-sighted wretch! this is the price thou hast given for security! In the rashness of thy thought thou saidst—'Nothing is wanting but his death to restore us to confidence and safety.' Lo! the purchase is made! Havoc and despair, that were restrained during his life, were let loose by his last sigh; now only is destruction made sure—thy Lady, thy Clarice, thy

friend, and thyself are, by this act, involved in irretrievable and common ruin!'

"I started from my attitude: I was scarcely conscious of any transition; the interval was fraught with stupor and amazement; it seemed as if my senses had been hushed in sleep, while the powers of locomotion were unconsciously exerted to bear me to my chamber. By whatever means the change was effected, there I was——

"I have been able to proceed thus far: I can scarcely believe the testimony of my memory that assures me of this. My task is almost executed; but whence shall I obtain strength enough to finish it? What I have told is light as gossamer compared

compared with the insupportable and crushing horrors of that which is to come. Heaven, in token of its vengeance, will enable me to proceed: it is fitting that my scene should thus close!

"My fancy began to be infected with the errors of my understanding: the mood into which my mind was plunged was incapable of any propitious intermission; all within me was tempestuous and dark; my ears were accessible to no sounds but those of shrieks and lamentations. It was deepest midnight, and all the noises of a great metropolis were hushed; yet I listened as if to catch some strain of the dirge that was begun: sable robes, sobs, and a dreary solemnity encompassed me on all sides; I was haunted to despair by images of death,

imaginary clamours, and the train of funeral pageantry: I seemed to have passed forward to a distant æra of my life: the effects which were to come were already realized—the foresight of misery created it, and set me in the midst of that hell which I feared.

"From a paroxism like this the worst might reasonably be dreaded; yet the next step to destruction was not suddenly taken: I paused on the brink of the precipice, as if to survey the depth of that frenzy that invaded me—was able to ponder on the scene, and deliberate in a state that partook of calm, on the circumstances of my situation: my mind was harassed by the repitition of one idea; conjecture deepened into certainty; I could place the object in no light which did

did not corroborate the persuasion that, in the act committed, I had ensured the destruction of my Lady.

" At length my mind, somewhat relieved from the tempest of my fears, began to trace and analyze the consequences which I dreaded.

" The fate of Wiatte would inevitably draw along with it that of his sister: in what way would this effect be produced? Were they linked together by a sympathy whose influence was independent of sensible communication? Could she arrive at a knowledge of his miserable end by other than verbal means? I had heard of such extraordinary copartnerships in being and modes of instantaneous intercourse among beings locally distant. Was

this a new instance of the subtilty of mind? Had she already endured his agonies, and, like him, already ceased to breathe?

"Every hair bristled at this horrible suggestion. But the force of sympathy might be chimerical: buried in sleep, or engaged in careless meditation, the instrument by which her destiny might be accomplished was the steel of an assassin; a series of events, equally beyond the reach of foresight with those which had just happened, might introduce, with equal abruptness, a similar disaster. What at that moment was her condition? Reposing in safety in her chamber, as her family imagined. But were they not deceived? Was she not a mangled corpse? Whatever were her situation, it could not be ascertained, except by extraordinary means, till

till the morning. Was it wise to defer the scrutiny till then? Why not instantly investigate the truth?

"These ideas passed rapidly through my mind: a considerable portion of time and amplification of phrase are necessary to exhibit verbally, ideas contemplated in a space of incalculable brevity. With the same rapidity I conceived the resolution of determining the truth of my suspicions. All the family but myself were at rest: winding passages would conduct me, without danger of disturbing them, to the hall from which double staircases ascended. One of these led to a saloon above; on the east side of which was a door that communicated with a suit of rooms, occupied by the lady of the mansion. The first was an antichamber,

in which a female servant usually lay; the second was the lady's own bed-chamber: this was a sacred recess, with whose situation, relative to the other apartments of the building, I was well acquainted; but of which I knew nothing from my own examination, having never been admitted into it.

"Thither I was now resolved to repair. I was not deterred by the sanctity of the place and hour; I was insensible to all consequences but the removal of my doubts: not that my hopes were balanced by my fears: that the same tragedy had been performed in her chamber and in the street, nothing hindered me from believing with as much cogency as if my own eyes had witnessed it, but the reluctance with which we admit a detestable truth.

"To

"To terminate a state of intolerable suspense, I resolved to proceed forthwith to her chamber. I took the light, and paced, with no interruption, along the galleries. I used no precaution: if I had met a servant or a robber, I am not sure that I should have noticed him; my attention was too perfectly engrossed to allow me to spare any to a casual object. I cannot affirm that no one observed me: this, however, was probable from the distribution of the dwelling:—it consisted of a central edifice and two wings; one of which was appropriated to domestics, and the other, at the extremity of which my apartment was placed, comprehended a library, and rooms for formal and social and literary conferences: these therefore were deserted at night, and my way lay along

along these; hence it was not likely that my steps would be observed.

"I proceeded to the hall: the principal parlour was beneath her chamber: in the confusion of my thoughts I mistook one for the other: I rectified as soon as I detected my mistake. I ascended, with a beating heart, the staircase. The door of the antichamber was unfastened: I entered, totally regardless of disturbing the girl who slept within. The bed which she occupied was concealed by curtains. Whether she were there I did not stop to examine: I cannot recollect that any tokens were given of wakefulness or alarm. It was not till I reached the door of her own apartment that my heart began to falter.

"It

"It was not that the momentousness of the question I was about to decide rushed with its genuine force upon my apprehension. Appalled and aghast, I had scarcely power to move the bolt. If the imagination of her death was not to be supported, how should I bear the spectacle of wounds and blood? Yet this was reserved for me. A few paces would set me in the midst of a scene of which I was the abhorred contriver.—Was it right to proceed? There were still the remnants of doubt: my forebodings might possibly be groundless; all within might be safety and serenity; a respite might be gained from the execution of an irrevocable sentence. What could I do? Was not any thing easy to endure in comparison with the agonies of suspense? If I could not obviate the evil, I must bear it; but the torments

torments of suspense were susceptible of remedy.

"I drew back the bolt, and entered with the reluctance of fear, rather than the cautiousness of guilt. I could not lift my eyes from the ground. I advanced to the middle of the room. Not a sound like that of the dying saluted my ear. At length, shaking off the fetters of hopelessness, I looked up.

"I saw nothing calculated to confirm my fears: every where there reigned quiet and order. My heart leaped with exultation: can it be, said I, that I have been betrayed with shadows?—But this is not sufficient.

"Within an alcove was the bed that belonged

belonged to her: if her safety were inviolate, it was here that she reposed. What remained to convert tormenting doubt into ravishing certainty? I was insensible to the perils of my present situation. If she indeed were there, would not my intrusion awaken her? She would start, and perceive me at this hour standing at her bed-side. How should I account for an intrusion so unexampled and audacious? I could not communicate my fears; I could not tell her that the blood with which my hands were stained had flowed from the wounds of her brother.

"My mind was inaccessible to such considerations; they did not even modify my predominant idea: obstacles like these, had they existed, would have been trampled under foot.

"Leaving

"Leaving the lamp that I bore on the table, I approached the bed: I slowly drew aside the curtain, and beheld her tranquilly slumbering. I listened, but so profound was her sleep that not even her breathings could be overheard. I dropped the curtain and retired.

"How blissful and mild were the illuminations of my bosom at this discovery! A joy that surpassed all utterance succeeded the fierceness of desperation: I stood for some moments wrapt in delightful contemplation. Alas! it was a luminous, but transient interval! The madness, to whose black suggestions it bore so strong a contrast, began now to make sensible approaches on my understanding.

'True,' said I, 'she lives; her slumber is

is serene and happy; she is blind to her approaching destiny; some hours will at least be rescued from anguish and death. When she wakes the phantom that soothed her will vanish: the tidings cannot be withheld from her—the murderer of thy brother cannot hope to enjoy thy smiles: those ravishing accents with which thou hast used to greet me, will be changed—scowling and reproaches, the invectives of thy anger and the maledictions of thy justice, will rest upon my head.

"What is the blessing which I made the theme of my boastful arrogance? This interval of being and repose is momentary: she will awake but only to perish at the spectacle of my ingratitude—she will awake only to the consciousness of instantly impending death. When she again

again sleeps she will wake no more. I her son—I, whom the law of my birth doomed to poverty and hardship, but whom her unsolicited beneficence snatched from those evils, and endowed with the highest good known to intelligent beings—the consolations of science and the blandishments of affluence; to whom the darling of her life, the offspring in whom are faithfully preserved the lineaments of its angelic mother, she has not denied!—what is the recompense that I have made?—how have I discharged the measureless debt of gratitude to which she is entitled? Thus——

'Cannot my guilt be extenuated? Is there not a good that I can do thee? Must I perpetrate unmingled evil? Is the province assigned me that of an infernal

infernal emissary, whose efforts are concentered in a single purpose, and that purpose a malignant one? I am the author of thy calamities—whatever misery is reserved for thee, I am the source whence it flows. Can I not set bounds to the stream? Cannot I prevent thee from returning to a consciousness which, till it ceases to exist, will not cease to be rent and mangled?

'Yes; it is in my power to screen thee from the coming storm—to accelerate thy journey to rest:—I will do it!'

"The impulse was not to be resisted: I moved with the suddenness of lightning; armed with a pointed implement that lay—it was a dagger: as I set down the lamp, I struck the edge; yet I saw

it not, or noticed it not till I needed its assistance: by what accident it came hither, to what deed of darkness it had already been subservient, I had no power to enquire. I stepped to the table and seized it.

"The time which this action required was insufficient to save me—my doom was ratified by Powers which no human energies can counterwork.—Need I go farther? Did you entertain any imagination of so frightful a catastrophe? I am overwhelmed by turns with dismay and with wonder; I am prompted by turns to tear my heart from my breast, and deny faith to the verdict of my senses.

"Was it I that hurried to the deed? No; it was the demon that possessed me: my

my limbs were guided to the bloody office by a power foreign and superior to mine: I had been defrauded for a moment of the empire of my muscles—a little moment for that sufficed.

"If my destruction had not been decreed, why was the image of Clarice so long excluded? Yet why do I say long? The fatal resolution was conceived, and I hastened to the execution in a period too brief for more than itself to be viewed by the intellect.

"What then? Were my hands imbrued in this precious blood? Was it to this extremity of horror that my evil genius was determined to urge me? Too surely this was his purpose!—too surely I was qualified to be its minister!

"I lifted

"I lifted the weapon—its point was aimed at the bosom of the sleeper—the impulse was given——

"At the instant a piercing shriek was uttered behind me, and a stretched-out hand grasping the blade, made it swerve widely from its aim: it descended, but without inflicting a wound—its force was spent upon the bed.

"Oh for words to paint that stormy transition! I loosed my hold of the dagger—I started back, and fixed eyes of frantic curiosity on the author of my rescue. He that interposed to arrest my deed, that started into being and activity at a moment so pregnant with fate, without tokens of his purpose, or his coming

being

being previously imparted, could not, methought, be less than Divinity.

"The first glance that I darted on this being corroborated my conjecture—it was the figure and the lineaments of Mrs. Lorimer. Negligently habited in flowing and brilliant white, with features bursting with terror and wonder, the likeness of that being who was stretched upon the bed now stood before me.

"All that I am able to conceive of angel was comprised in the moral constitution of this woman. That her genius had overleaped all bounds, and interposed to save her, was no audacious imagination: in the state in which my mind then was, no other belief than this could occupy the first place.

"My tongue was tied: I gazed by turns upon her who stood before me, and her who lay upon the bed, and who, awakened by the shriek that had been uttered, now opened her eyes: she started from her pillow, and, by assuming a new and more distinct attitude, permitted me to recognise *Clarice herself!*

"Three days before I had left her beside the bed of a dying friend, at a solitary mansion in the mountains of Donnegal: here it had been her resolution to remain till her friend should breathe her last. Fraught with this persuasion, knowing this to be the place and hour of repose of my Lady, hurried forward by the impetuosity of my own conceptions, deceived by the faint gleam which penetrated through the curtain and imperfectly irradiated

irradiated the features which bore at all times a powerful resemblance to those of Mrs. Lorimer, I had rushed to the brink of this terrible precipice!

"Why did I linger on the verge? Why, thus perilously situated, did I not throw myself headlong? The steel was yet in my hand—a single blow would have pierced my heart, and shut out from my remembrance and foresight the past and the future.

"The moment of insanity had gone by, and I was once more myself: instead of regarding the act which I had meditated as the dictate of compassion or of justice, it only added to the sum of my ingratitude, and gave wings to the

whirlwind that was sent to bear me to perdition.

"Perhaps I was influenced by a sentiment which I had not leisure to distribute into parts: my understanding was no doubt bewildered in the maze of consequences which would spring from my act. How should I explain my coming hither in this murderous guise, my arm lifted to destroy the idol of my soul, and the darling child of my patroness? In what words should I unfold the tale of Wiatte, and enumerate the motives that terminated in the present scene? What penalty had not my infatuation and cruelty deserved? What could I less than turn the dagger's point against my own bosom?

"A second

"A second time the blow was thwarted and diverted; once more this beneficent interposer held my arm from the perpetration of a new iniquity—once more frustrated the instigations of that demon, of whose malice a mysterious destiny had consigned me to be the sport and the prey.

"Every new moment added to the sum of my inexpiable guilt; murder was succeeded in an instant by the more detestable enormity of suicide. She to whom my ingratitude was flagrant in proportion to the benefits of which she was the author, had now added to her former acts that of rescuing me from the last of mischiefs.

"I threw the weapon on the floor.

The zeal which prompted her to seize my arm, this action occasioned to subside, and to yield place to those emotions which this spectacle was calculated to excite. She watched me in silence and with an air of ineffable solicitude. Clarice, governed by the instinct of modesty, wrapped her bosom and face in the bed-clothes, and testified her horror by vehement, but scarcely articulate exclamations.

"I moved forward, but my steps were random and tottering: my thoughts were fettered by reverie, and my gesticulations destitute of meaning; my tongue faltered without speaking, and I felt as if life and death were struggling within me for the mastery.

"My

"My will, indeed, was far from being neutral in this contest. To such as I, annihilation is the supreme good: to shake off the ills that fasten on us by shaking off existence, is a lot which the system of Nature has denied to man. By escaping from life, I should be delivered from this scene, but should only rush into a world of retribution, and be immersed in new agonies.

"I was yet to live; no instrument of my deliverence was within reach; I was powerless: to rush from the presence of these women, to hide me for ever from their scrutiny and their upbraiding, to snatch from their minds all traces of the existence of Clithero, was the scope of unutterable longings.

"Urged to flight by every motive of which my nature was susceptible, I was yet rooted to the spot: had the pause been only to be interrupted by me, it would have lasted for ever.

"At length Mrs. Lorimer, clasping her hands and lifting them, exclaimed, in a tone melting into pity and grief—'Clithero, what is this? How came you hither, and why?'

"I struggled for utterance.—'I came to murder you!—Your brother has perished by my hands!—Fresh from the commission of this deed, I have hastened hither to perpetrate the same crime upon you!'

'My

'My brother!' replied Mrs. Lorimer, with new vehemence: 'Oh, say not so! I have just heard of his return from Sarsefield, and that he lives.'

'He is dead,' repeated I, with fierceness: 'I know it—it was I that killed him!'

'Dead!' she faintly articulated—'and by thee Clithero! Oh cursed chance that hindered thee from killing me also! Dead!—then is the omen fulfilled!—then am I undone!—lost for ever!'

"Her eyes now wandered from me, and her countenance sunk into a wild and rueful expression; hope was utterly extinguished in her heart, and life forsook

her at the same moment: she sunk upon the floor, pallid and breathless.

"How she came into possession of this knowledge I know not: it is possible that Sarsefield had repented of concealment, and, in the interval that passed between our separation and my encounter with Wiatte, had returned, and informed her of the re-appearance of this miscreant.

"Thus then was my fate consummated: I was rescued from destroying her by a dagger, only to behold her perish by the tidings which I brought: thus was every omen of mischief and misery fulfilled—thus was the enmity of Wiatte rendered efficacious, and the instrument

instrument of his destruction changed into the executioner of his revenge.

" Such is the tale of my crimes. It is not for me to hope that the curtain of oblivion will ever shut out the dismal spectacle—it will haunt me for ever: the torments that grow out of it can terminate only with the thread of my existence; but that I know full well will never end: death is but a shifting of the scene, and the endless progress of eternity, which to the good is merely the perfection of felicity, and to the wicked an accumulation of woe. The self-destroyer is his own enemy: this has ever been my opinion; hitherto it has influenced my action: now, though the belief continues, its influence on my conduct is annihilated. I am no stranger to the depth of that

abyss into which I shall plunge.—No matter; change is precious for its own sake.

"Well, I was still to live: my abode must be somewhere fixed: my conduct was henceforth the result of a perverse and rebellious principle; I banished myself for ever from my native soil; I vowed never more to behold the face of my Clarice, to abandon my friends, my books, all my wonted labours and accustomed recreations.

"I was neither ashamed nor afraid: I considered not in what way the justice of the country would affect me—it made no part of my contemplations; I was not embarrassed by the choice of expedients for trammelling up the visible consequences and for eluding suspicion.

The idea of abjuring my country, and flying for ever from the hateful scene, partook, to my apprehension, of the vast, the boundless, and the strange: of plunging from the height of fortune to obscurity and indigence, corresponded with my present state of mind: it was of a piece with the tremendous and wonderful events that had just happened.

"These were the images that haunted me while I stood speechlessly gazing at the ruin before me. I heard a noise from without, or imagined that I heard it: my reverie was broken, and my muscular power restored. I descended into the street through doors of which I possessed one set of keys, and hurried by the shortest way beyond the precincts of the city. I had lain no plan; my conceptions

ceptions with regard to the future were shapeless and confused: successive incidents supplied me with a clue, and suggested, as they rose, the next step to be taken.

"I threw off the garb of affluence, and assumed a beggar's attire. That I had money about me for the accomplishment of my purposes was wholly accidental. I travelled along the coast, and when I arrived at one town, knew not why I should go further; but my restlessness was unabated, and change was some relief. I at length arrived at Belfast. A vessel was preparing for America. I embraced eagerly the opportunity of passing into a new world. I arrived at Philadelphia. As soon as I landed, I

wandered

wandered hither, and was content to wear out my few remaining days in the service of Inglefield.

" I have no friends. Why should I trust my story to another? I have no solicitude about concealment: but who is there will derive pleasure or benefit from my rehearsal?—and why should I expatiate on so hateful a theme? Yet now have I consented to this. I have confided to you the history of my disasters: I am not fearful of the use that you may be disposed to make of it; I shall quickly set myself beyond the reach of human tribunals—I shall relieve the ministers of law from the trouble of punishing. The recent events which induced you to summon me to this conference, have likewise

wise determined me to make this disclosure.

"I was not aware for some time of my perturbed sleep. No wonder that sleep cannot sooth miseries like mine—that I am alike infested by memory in wakefulness and slumber. Yet I was anew distressed at the discovery that my thoughts found their way to my lips without my being conscious of it, and that my steps wandered forth unknowingly, and without the guidance of my will.

"The story you have told is not incredible; the disaster to which you allude did not fail to excite my regret: I can still weep over the untimely fall of youth and

and worth. I can no otherwise account for my frequenting this shade than by the distant resemblance which the death of this man bore to that of which I was the perpetrator. This resemblance occurred to me at first: if time were able to weaken the impression which was produced by my crime, this similitude was adapted to revive and enforce it.

"The wilderness, and the cave to which you followed me, were familiar to my Sunday rambles. Often have I indulged in audible griefs on the cliffs of that valley; often have I brooded over my sorrows in the recesses of that cavern. This scene is adapted to my temper: its mountainous asperities supply me with images of desolation and seclusion, and its headlong

headlong streams lull me into temporary forgetfulness of mankind.

"I comprehend you: you suspect me of concern in the death of Waldegrave. You could not do otherwise: the conduct that you have witnessed was that of a murderer. I will not upbraid you for your suspicions, though I have bought exemption from them at a high price."

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

THERE ended his narrative. He started from the spot where he stood, and, without affording me any opportunity of replying or commenting, disappeared amidst the thickest of the wood. I had no time to exert myself for his detention: I could have used no arguments for this end to which it is probable he would have listened. The story I had heard was too extraordinary, too completely the reverse of all

my

my expectations, to allow me to attend to the intimations of self-murder which he dropped.

The secret which I imagined was about to be disclosed, was as inscrutable as ever; not a circumstance, from the moment when Clithero's character became the subject of my meditations, till the conclusion of his tale, but served to confirm my suspicion. Was this error to be imputed to credulity? Would not any one from similar appearances have drawn similar conclusions?—or is there a criterion by which truth can always be distinguished? Was it owing to my imperfect education that the inquietudes of this man were not traced to a deed performed at the distance of a thousand leagues—to the murder of his patroness and friend?

I had

I had heard a tale, which apparently related to scenes and persons far distant; but though my suspicions have appeared to have been misplaced, what should hinder but that the death of my friend was, in like manner, an act of momentary insanity, and originated in a like spirit of mistaken benevolence?

But I did not consider this tale merely in relation to myself: my life had been limited and uniform; I had communed with romances and historians; but the impression made upon me by this incident was unexampled in my experience; my reading had furnished me with no instance, in any degree, parallell to this; and I found that to be a distant and second-hand spectator of events, was widely different from witnessing them myself,

myself, and partaking in their consequences. My judgment was, for a time, sunk into imbecility and confusion: my mind was full of the images unavoidably suggested by this tale, but they existed in a kind of chaos; and not otherwise than gradually was I able to reduce them to distinct particulars, and subject them to a deliberate and methodical inspection.

How was I to consider this act of Clithero? What a deplorable infatuation! Yet it was the necessary result of a series of ideas mutually linked and connected; his conduct was dictated by a motive allied to virtue—it was the fruit of an ardent and grateful spirit.

The death of Wiatte could not be censured: the life of Clithero was unspeakably

ably more valuable than that of his antagonist;—it was the instinct of self-preservation that swayed him; he knew not his adversary in time enough to govern himself by that knowledge: had the assailant been an unknown ruffian, his death would have been followed by no remorse; the spectacle of his dying agonies would have dwelt upon the memory of his assassin like any other mournful sight in the production of which he bore no part.

It must at least be said that his will was not concerned in this transaction: he acted in obedience to an impulse which he could not controul, nor resist. Shall we impute guilt where there is no design? Shall a man extract food for self-reproach from an action, to which it is not enough to say that he was actuated by no culpable intention,

intention, but that he was swayed by no intention whatever? If consequences arise that cannot be foreseen, shall we find no refuge in the persuasion of our rectitude and of human frailty? Shall we deem ourselves criminal because we do not enjoy the attributes of Deity—because our power and our knowledge are confined by impassable boundaries?

But whence arose the subsequent intention? It was the fruit of a dreadful mistake. His intents were noble and compassionate: but this is of no avail to free him from the imputation of guilt; no remembrance of past beneficence can compensate for this crime; the scale, loaded with the recriminations of his conscience, is immovable by any counter-weight.

But

But what are the conclusions to be drawn by dispassionate observers? Is it possible to regard this person with disdain or with enmity? The crime originated in those limitations which Nature has imposed upon human faculties: proofs of a just intention are all that are requisite to exempt us from blame. He is thus in consequence of a double mistake:—the light in which he views this event is erroneous; he judges wrong, and is therefore miserable.

How imperfect are the grounds of all our decisions! Was it of no use to superintend his childhood, to select his instructors and examples, to mark the operations of his principles, to see him emerging into youth, to follow him through various scenes and trying vicis-

 situdes,

situdes, and mark the uniformity of his integrity? Who would have predicted his future conduct? Who would not have affirmed the impossibility of an action like this?

How mysterious was the connection between the fate of Wiatte and his sister! By such circuitous, and yet infallible means, were the prediction of Mrs. Lorimer and the vengeance of her brother accomplished! In how many cases may it be said, as in this, that the prediction was the cause of its own fulfilment—that the very act which considerate observers, and even himself for a time, imagined to have utterly precluded the execution of Wiatte's menaces, should be that inevitably leading to it—that the execution should be assigned to him who, abounding in abhorrence,

abhorrence, and in the act of self-defence, was the slayer of the menacer!

As the obstructor of his designs, Wiatte waylaid and assaulted Clithero: he perished in the attempt. Were his designs frustrated? No:—it was thus that he secured the gratification of his vengeance: his sister was cut off in the bloom of life and prosperity; by a refinement of good fortune, the voluntary minister of his malice had entailed upon himself exile without reprieve, and misery without end.

But what chiefly excited my wonder, was the connection of this tale with the destiny of Sarsefield. This was he whom I have frequently mentioned to you as my preceptor. About four years previous to

this era, he appeared in this district without fortune or friend. He desired one evening to be accommodated at my uncle's house. The conversation turning on the objects of his journey, he professed himself in search of lucrative employment. My uncle proposed to him to become a teacher, there being a sufficient number of young people in this neighbourhood to afford him occupation and subsistence.

He found it his interest to embrace this proposal. I of course became his pupil, and demeaned myself in such a manner as speedily to grow into a favourite. He communicated to us no part of his early history, but informed us sufficiently of his adventures in Asia and Italy, to make it plain that this was the

same

same person alluded to by Clithero. During his abode among us, his conduct was irreproachable. When he left us, he manifested the most poignant regret; but this originated chiefly in his regard for me. He promised to maintain with me an epistolary intercourse: since his departure, however, I had heard nothing respecting him. It was with unspeakable regret that I now learned the disappointment of his hopes; and was inquisitive respecting the measures which he would adopt in his new situation. Perhaps he would once more return to America, and I should again be admitted to the enjoyment of his society: this event I anticipated with the highest satisfaction.

At present, the fate of the unhappy Clithero was the subject of abundant

anxiety. On his suddenly leaving me at the conclusion of his tale, I supposed that he had gone upon one of his usual rambles, and that it would terminate only with the day.

Next morning a message was received from Inglefield, enquiring if any one knew what had become of his servant. I could not listen to this message with tranquillity: I recollected the hints that he had given of some design upon his life, and admitted the most dreary forebodings. I speeded to Inglefield's. Clithero had not returned, they told me, the preceding evening. He had not apprized them of any intention to change his abode: his boxes, and all that composed his slender property, were found in their ordinary state:

state: he had expressed no dissatisfaction with his present condition.

Several days passed, and no tidings could be procured of him. His absence was a topic of general speculation; but was a source of particular anxiety to no one but myself. My apprehensions were surely built upon sufficient grounds: from the moment that we parted no one had seen or heard of him. What mode of suicide he had selected, he had disabled us from discovering by the impenetrable secrecy in which he had involved it.

In the midst of my reflections upon this subject, the idea of the wilderness occurred. Could he have executed his design in the deepest of its recesses? These were unvisited by human footsteps,

and his bones might lie for ages in this solitude without attracting observation; to seek them where they lay, to gather them together, and provide for them a grave, was a duty which appeared incumbent on me, and of which the performance was connected with a thousand habitual sentiments and mixed pleasures.

Thou knowest my devotion to the spirit that breathes its inspiration in the gloom of forests, and on the verge of streams: I love to immerse myself in shades and dells, and hold converse with the solemnities and secrecies of Nature in the rude retreats of Norwalk. The disappearance of Clithero had furnished new incitements to ascend its cliffs and pervade its thickets, as I cherished the hope of meeting in my rambles with some traces of this

this man. But might he not still live? His words had imparted the belief that he intended to distroy himself: this catastrophe, however, was far from certain. Was it not in my power to avert it? Could I not restore a mind thus vigorous, to tranquil and wholesome existence? Could I not subdue his perverse disdain and immeasurable abhorrence of himself? His upbraiding and his scorn were unmerited and misplaced: perhaps they argued frenzy rather than prejudice; but frenzy, like prejudice, was curable: reason was no less an antidote to the illusions of insanity like his, than to the illusions of error.

I did not immediately recollect that to subsist in this desert was impossible: nuts were the only fruits it produced, and

these were inadequate to sustain human life. If it were haunted by Clithero, he must occasionally pass its limits, and beg or purloin victuals: this deportment was too humiliating and flagitious to be imputed to him. There was reason to suppose him smitten with the charms of solitude, of a lonely abode in the midst of mountainous and rugged nature; but this could not be uninterruptedly enjoyed: life could be supported only by occasionally visiting the haunts of men, in the guise of a thief or a mendicant. Hence, since Clithero was not known to have reappeared at any farm-house in the neighbourhood, I was compelled to conclude, either that he had retired far from the district, or that he was dead.

Though I designed that my leisure

should chiefly be consumed in the bosom of Norwalk, I almost dismissed the hope of meeting with the fugitive. There were indeed two sources of my hopelessness on this occasion: not only it was probable that Clithero had fled far away, but, should he have concealed himself in some nook or cavern within these precincts, his concealment was not to be traced: this arose from the nature of that sterile region.

It would not be easy to describe the face of this district in a few words. Half of Solebury, thou knowest, admits neither of plough nor spade: the cultivable space lies along the river; and the desert, lying on the north, has gained by some means the appellation of Norwalk. Canst thou imagine a space, somewhat circular, about

six miles in diameter, and exhibiting a perpetual and intricate variety of craggy eminences and deep dells?

The hollows are single, and walled around by cliffs, ever varying in shape and height, and have seldom any perceptible communication with each other. These hollows are of all dimensions, from the narrowness and depth of a well, to the amplitude of one hundred yards. Winter's snow is frequently found in these cavities at midsummer. The streams that burst forth from every crevice are thrown, by the irregularities of the surface, into numberless cascades, often disappear in mists or in chasms, and emerge from subterranean channels, and, finally, either subside into lakes, or quietly meander through

through the lower and more level grounds.

Wherever Nature left a flat it is made rugged and scarcely passable by enormous and fallen trunks, accumulated by the storms of ages, and forming, by their slow decay, a moss-covered soil, the haunt of rabbets and lizards. These spots are obscured by the melancholy umbrage of pines, whose eternal murmurs are in unison with vacancy and solitude, with the reverberations of the torrents, and the whistling of the blasts. Hiccory and poplar, which abound in the low lands, find here no fostering elements.

A sort of continued vale, winding and abrupt, leads into the midst of this region and through it. This vale serves the purpose

purpose of a road: it is a tedious maze and perpetual declivity, and requires from the passenger a cautious and sure foot. Openings and ascents occasionally present themselves on each side, which seem to promise you access to the interior region; but always terminate, sooner or later, in insuperable difficulties, at the verge of a precipice, or the bottom of a steep.

Perhaps no one was more acquainted with this wilderness than I; but my knowledge was extremely imperfect. I had traversed parts of it at an early age, in pursuit of berries and nuts, or led by a roaming disposition: afterwards the sphere of my rambles was enlarged, and their purpose changed. When Sarsefield came among us I became his favourite scholar and the companion of all his pedestrian excursions:

excursions: he was fond of penetrating into these recesses, partly from the love of picturesque scenes, partly to investigate its botanical and mineral productions, and partly to carry on more effectually that species of instruction which he had adopted with regard to me, and which chiefly consisted in moralizing narratives, or synthetical reasonings. These excursions had familiarized me with its outlines and most accessible parts; but there was much which, perhaps, could never be reached without wings, and much the only paths to which I might for ever overlook.

Every new excursion indeed added somewhat to my knowledge; new tracks were pursued, new prospects detected, and new summits were gained: my rambles were

were productive of incessant novelty; though they always terminated in the prospect of limits that could not be overleaped. But none of these had led me wider from my customary paths than that which had taken place when in pursuit of Clithero: I had faint remembrance of the valley into which I had descended after him; but till then I had viewed it at a distance, and supposed it impossible to reach the bottom but by leaping from a precipice some hundred feet in height. The opposite steep seemed no less inaccesible; and the cavern at the bottom was impervious to any views which my former positions had enabled me to take of it.

My intention to re-examine this cave, and ascertain whither it led, had for a time

time been suspended by different considerations: it was now revived with more energy than ever. I reflected that this had formerly been haunted by Clithero, and might possibly have been the scene of the desperate act which he had meditated: it might at least conceal some token of his past existence; it might lead into spaces hitherto unvisited, and to summits from which wider landscapes might be seen.

One morning I set out to explore this scene. The rode which Clithero had taken was laboriously circuitous. On my return from the first pursuit of him, I ascended the cliff in my former footsteps, but soon lighted on the beaten track which I have already described. This enabled me to shun a thousand obstacles which had

lately

lately risen before me, and opened an easy passage to the cavern.

I once more traversed this way. The brow of the hill was gained: the ledges of which it consisted afforded sufficient footing when the attempt was made, though viewed at a distance they seemed to be too narrow for that purpose. As I descended the rugged stairs, I could not but wonder at the temerity and precipitation with which this descent had formerly been made: it seemed as if the noon-day-light and the tardiest circumspection would scarcely enable me to accomplish it; yet then it had been done with headlong speed, and with no guidance but the moon's uncertain rays.

I reached the mouth of the cave. Till now

now I had forgotten that a lamp or a torch might be necessary to direct my subterranean footsteps. I was unwilling to defer the attempt. Light might possibly be requisite, if the cave had no other outlet; somewhat might present itself within to the eyes which might for ever elude the hands: but I was more inclined to consider it merely as an avenue, terminating in an opening on the summit of the steep, or on the opposite side of the ridge. Caution might supply the place of light; or, having explored the cave as far as possible at present, I might hereafter return better furnished for the scrutiny.

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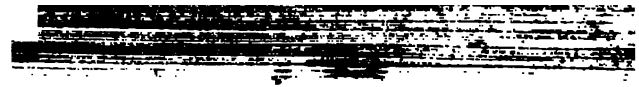
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